METRO / A23

DOJ asks appeals court to junk Leviste motion on case upgrade to murder

ACROSS / A18

Hope scandal upsets relatives in her native Abra

BUSINESS / B1

Peso weakens to $1: 48.715; investors fear US recession, inflated China stocks

SATURDAY SPECIAL / E1

Jennifer Hudson: From 'Idol' zero to Oscar-winning hero

We'll always have Paris, experiment teaches AP

NEW YORK—SO YOU MAY have heard: Paris Hilton was ticketed the other day for driving with a suspended license.

Not huge news, even by celebrity-gossip standards. Here at The Associated

WE'LL/ A21

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, March 3, 2007 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 85 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Children to learn ABCs of honest, simple living

By Jocelyn R. Uy

WHAT BETTER WAY TO FIGHT GRAFT AND corruption than teaching schoolchildren the ABCs of simple and honest living?

Beginning next school year, students in the more than 44,000 public schools nationwide can expect their teachers to discuss more comprehensively fundamental values that will help

CHILDREN/ A6

Soldiers prowling slums

'Militarization' of Metro Manila's poor areas alarms residents

By TJ Burgonio

IN THE CROWDED BARANGAY Commonwealth in Quezon City, Army soldiers prowling the streets at different times of day and night are becoming a common sight, striking fear in the hearts of residents, particularly the young.

Although ostensibly in the area to keep the peace, the soldiers, strangely, have been seeking out members of militant party-list groups, several residents told the INQUIRER.

At one point, they even rallied the people against voting for certain party-list groups in the coming May elections, residents said.

Told of the incidents, the Commission on Elections called on the Armed Forces to investigate the reports. *(See related story on Page A20.)*

The military admitted it had deployed soldiers in 27 mostly depressed barangays in Metro Manila as part of a "holistic approach" to the insurgency problem. It said this had nothing to do with the current election campaign.

"The day they came here, we were startled. We were wondering why the soldiers were here, and armed at that," a woman resident at Barangay Commonwealth said in an interview.

Within days after they turned up in mid-December, the soldiers, Armalite rifles slung on their shoulders, started asking around for the names of officials of Kaunlaran Extension Neighborhood Association (Kena), a group of urban poor.

"They badgered us for the list of the officials, saying they only wanted to help us solve a land dispute here," said the resident, who asked not to be named for fear of reprisals. "They kept coming back to me for the list, but we never gave it to them."

SOLDIERS/ A20

GO not ruling out naming bet for No. 12

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

DESPITE A WARNING FROM ITS COALITION partner, the Liberal Party faction headed by Sen. Franklin Drilon, the leadership of the Genuine Opposition has refused to rule out adopting another senatorial candidate to replace Sen. Francis Pangilinan.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, president of the United Opposition and member of the GO "executive committee," yesterday said he and other GO leaders were reserving their right to adopt another candidate to complete the 12-member ticket at a later date.

Binay stressed that they were not considering adopting one at the moment.

"We retain the option to fill up the slot, but at the moment we will only campaign for 11 [candidates]. We have made that clear," he said in a news conference at the GO headquarters.

On Wednesday, GO leaders dropped Pangilinan as one of their "guest candidates" for his refusal to join opposition campaign sorties, including the proclamation rally on Feb. 24.

Pangilinan, who chairs the LP-Drilon faction, has maintained that he wants to run as an independent candidate.

GO NOT/ A6

Now it can be told: Why GO is unraveling

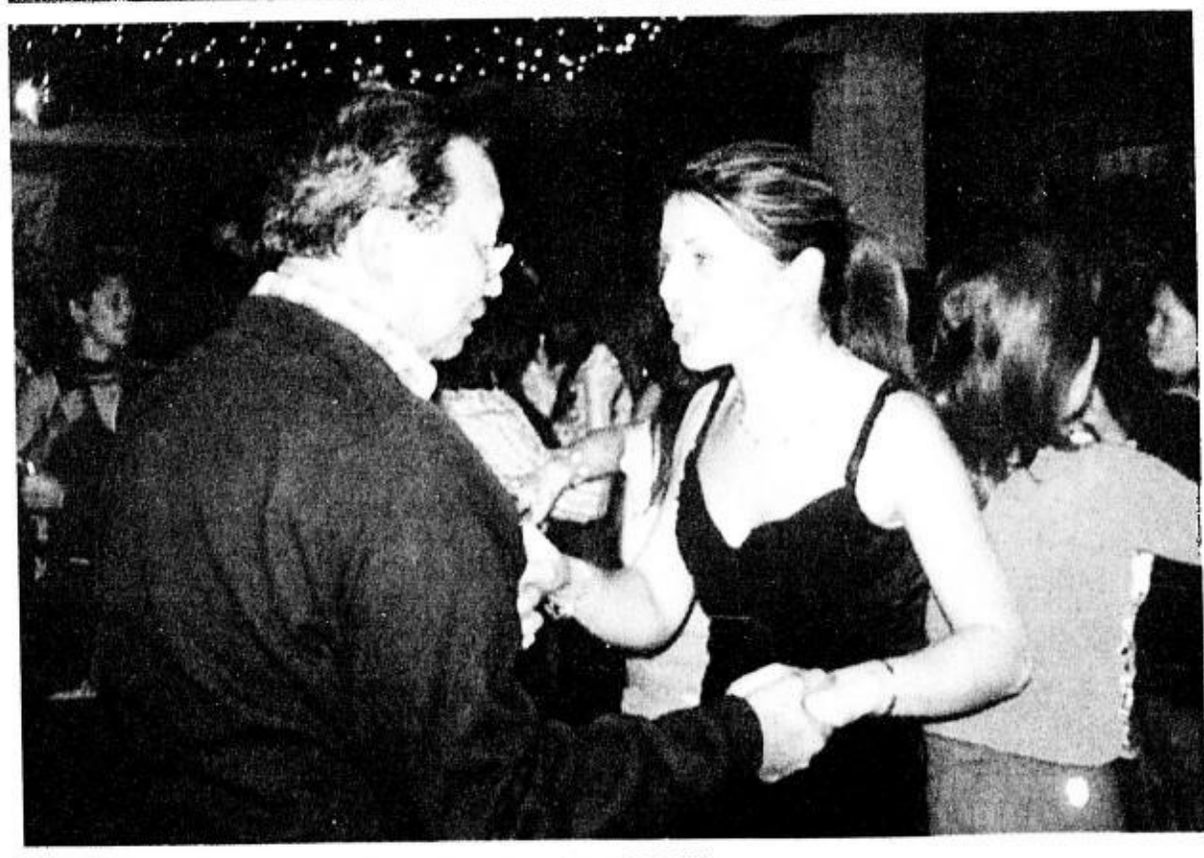
By Fe Zamora

WAITING FOR THE WEDNESDAY GROUP to decide to join the Genuine Opposition's senatorial lineup nearly derailed the opposition, according to GO candidate Alan Peter Cayetano.

"We waited for them. We lost our momentum even before the campaign started," Cayetano told INQUIRER editors and reporters Thursday night in reference to Senate President Manuel Villar and Senators Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan, Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto, all reelectionists.

Cayetano's disclosure lent credence to the prevailing perception that the campaign for the GO senatorial slate, which was vaunted as "unbeatable" early in January, lost steam

NOW/ A6



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AS PARIS (HILTON) WOULD SAY, HE'S (RED) HOT
Jose Ma. Sison, the founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines, tripped the light fantastic with movie star Ara Mina who was then on a concert tour in Europe (top) at a Christmas party in Amsterdam, and again at the Migrante's Valentine's party (above) with an unidentified woman. *(Story on Page A11.)*

GMA sets 9% GDP target in three years

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE ECONOMY WILL NEED TO DOUBLE ITS current growth rate, or increase GDP growth by at least 9 percent, if it is to eliminate poverty, Malacañang said yesterday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo herself set the target of achieving 9 percent growth in three years so that the poor can feel the trickle-down effect of a robust economy.

The President's chief of staff, Joey Salceda, said the President has "in so many of our policy conversations," expressed frustration at the inability of the economy to create more jobs.

GDP, or the growth domestic product, gives some indication of the strength of domestic industry as it measures the total annual output, excluding net income from abroad.

In late January, the National Economic

GMA SETS A21

GO cancels another rally

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
in Visayas
and Juliet Labog-Javellana
in Manila

ILOILO CITY—FOR STILL UNCLEAR REASONS, the Genuine Opposition canceled its second major out-of-town campaign sortie scheduled yesterday in Antique.

San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito, outgoing GO campaign manager, said they decided to skip the Antique leg of their campaign because of "local issues."

He said they called off the Antique leg of the campaign upon the advice of senior opposition leader, former Sen. Ernesto Maceda, "in order not to antagonize" their local allies.

Ejercito declined to give any details, saying he was not in a position to disclose the issues.

But Rodolfo Cañeda, team leader of the

GO CANCELS/ A21

PCGG: Coco levy compromise deal reached

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE GOVERNMENT HAS REACHED an understanding with several stakeholder groups of the coconut levy funds on how to manage its stake in San Miguel Corp. (SMC), Southeast Asia's largest food and beverage firm.

According to Presidential Commission on Good Government Chair Camilo L. Sabio, the deal calls for the government to organize the levy funds—now estimated to reach P130 billion—into a foundation where all the stakeholders will be represented.

"The principal agreement or suggestion of the farmers is to organize a foundation that would initially be controlled by the government," Sabio said in an interview with the ABS-CBN television.

Because not all of the coconut farmers have been organized yet, government nominees would initially control the foundation's board. If there are to be 15 board members, eight would be government nominees and seven nominees of the farmers, Sabio said.

As the coconut farmers get better organized, the government will gradually cede control of the foundation to representatives of the sector.

"More and more directors will be nominated by the coconut farmers," Sabio said.

The foundation will initially manage the 27-percent stake in the SMC that was acquired using the funds of the coconut levy, a forced tax imposed on coconut farmers over a 10-year period by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos. At present market prices, this SMC stake is worth an estimated P32 billion.

The Supreme Court in 2001 ruled that the coco levy funds were prima facie public funds. The Sandiganbayan in 2003 declared the levy funds were conclusively public funds held by government in trust for the country's coconut farmers.

Sabio said the Department of Finance under Secretary Margarito B. Teves is working on the finer points of the compromise agreement, although the main idea of setting up the foundation has been agreed upon in principle.

The finance department group is expected to complete the proposed compromise deal by June at the earliest or by the end of the year at the latest, after

PCGG/ A21

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2007

Second FrontPage

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EZ2 FOUR DIGIT

6 17 | 8 9 9 8

Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening

2 9 6 | 7 4 0

(All in exact order)

MEGALOTTO 6/45

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The eastern section of the country will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated light rainshowers.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: LAW DE GUZMAN, INQUIRER RESEARCH/02/02/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Japanese PM's denial of sex slaves slammed

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVISTS IN THE PHILIPPINES yesterday denounced a comment by Japan's prime minister that there was no evidence Japanese soldiers forced women into sexual slavery during World War II.

"We are enraged," said Rechilda Extremadura, executive director of Lila Pilipina, an organization of activists and former Filipino wartime sex slaves.

Thousands of women from the Philippines and other Japanese-occupied nations were forced to work in brothels run by Japan's military during WWII.

"We will not allow them to deny it just like that," Extremadura said. "For us, good or bad, it is your history. If you are a responsible government, you are responsible enough to accept, acknowledge and be accountable."

Responding to a recent US congressional resolution calling for Japan's leader to formally acknowledge and apologize for the wartime sexual slavery, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told reporters in Tokyo on Thursday that "there was no evidence to prove there was coercion as initially suggested."

Hilaria Bustamante, an 81-year-old member of Lila Pilipina, said she was a sex slave in a Japanese garrison for more than a year.

Recounting her horror, she said she was heading home in 1942 after scavenging for rice grains at a farm when three Japanese soldiers stopped her on the road and seized her by the arms and legs and threw her into a truck "like a pig."

"Even as I struggled, I could not do anything. They slapped me, they punched me. I was only 16 then, what could I do?" she said. "They think we are like toilet paper that is just thrown after being used."

Rep. Liza Maza of the left-wing Gabriela women's party said Abe's statement was "an affront to all women victims of Japanese military sexual slavery" during the war.

"My God! There are so many living survivors of such atrocity," she said.

Extremadura said 120 are still alive among 174 documented Filipino "comfort women," the term used to refer to sex slaves provided to Japanese troops, who invaded the Philippines in 1941.

"Our women here, the grandmothers, said that they were forced, that they were coerced into rendering sexual servitude inside the garrisons, inside the 'comfort stations,'" Extremadura said.

"Now, let the Japanese government prove that they went there willingly ... so that they can be labeled as prostitutes. That is where this is heading."

Japan's military seized thousands of women from Korea, China, the Philippines and other places during the war and shipped them across Asia to provide sex for their troops. Historians say up to 200,000 women were involved.

Tokyo has generally refused to pay damages to individuals for the war, and says the issue was settled between governments in postwar treaties. Japanese courts have rejected a number of lawsuits brought by former sex slaves.

'We raped without reluctance'

TOKYO—YASUJI KANEKO, 87, still remembers the screams of the countless women he raped in China as a foot soldier in the Imperial Japanese Army in World War II.

Some were teenagers from the Korean peninsula serving as sex slaves in military-run brothels. Others were women in villages he and his comrades pillaged as they battled in eastern China.

"They cried out, but it didn't matter to us whether the women lived or died," Kaneko said in an interview at his Tokyo home. "We were the emperor's soldiers. Whether in military brothels or in the villages, we raped without reluctance."

Japan's forced prostitution of some 200,000 women in military brothels in the 1930s and '40s has long constituted one of the most horrifying chapters of its wartime rampage across Asia. The top government spokesman was finally forced to acknowledge wrongdoing in 1993.

Now Japan's government is questioning whether the apology was needed.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Thursday publicly denied women were forced into the military brothels in conquered lands, boosting renewed efforts by right-wing politicians who claim the women involved were professional prostitutes, rather than victims of abuse.

"There was no evidence to prove there was coercion as initially suggested," Abe told reporters. "That largely changes what constitutes the definition of coercion, and we have to take it from there."

The debate is heating up just as a private fund set up to compensate some of the victims is about to expire at the end of March amid accusations it was only a cover for the government to avoid taking responsibility. Tokyo has rejected most compensation claims, saying they were settled by postwar treaties.

Victims are outraged, and are pressing ahead with their demands for a full government apology rather than the 1993 statement of remorse by a spokesman.

"The Japanese government must not run from its responsibilities," said Lee Yong-soo, 78, who said she was taken as a 14-year-old from Taegu, Korea, by Japanese soldiers in 1944 to work as a sex slave in Taiwan. "I want them to apologize. To admit that they took me away, when I was a little girl, to be a sex slave. To admit that history."

The issue is not limited to Japan. Last month, the US House of Representatives held hearings on a resolution that urges the government of Japan to "apologize for and acknowledge" the imperial army's use of sex slaves during the war.

The sex slaves issue has also sparked tensions between Japan and its neighbors, who accuse Tokyo of trying to whitewash wartime atrocities.

Nigerian firms seek lifting of ban on OFWs

By Cynthia D. Balana

VARIOUS PRIVATE COMPANIES based in Bonny Island, Rivers State in Nigeria have appealed to the Philippine government to lift the ban on the deployment of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in the African country.

Foreign Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs Esteban Conejos said that a number of OFWs who had completed their vacation in the Philippines were having a hard time going back to their work in Nigeria because of the ban.

Conejos, who is still in Nigeria to help secure the release of two more Filipino hostages, and Philippine Ambassador to Nigeria Masaranga Umpa recently met with top-level officials of various companies operating in Bonny Island.

During their meeting, the employers presented their company profiles and structures, as well as the beefed-up security measures implemented in Bonny Island complex to combat the rise of kidnapping cases and other contingencies.

The ban was implemented by the Philippines after 24 Filipino seamen were kidnapped by militants in Nigeria on Jan. 20 and released nearly a month later. The seamen were in transit onboard the German vessel Baco Liner II in Warri near Delta State when kidnappers took over their cargo ship carrying oil products.

Two more Filipinos—an engineer and a Filipina—are still being held militants.

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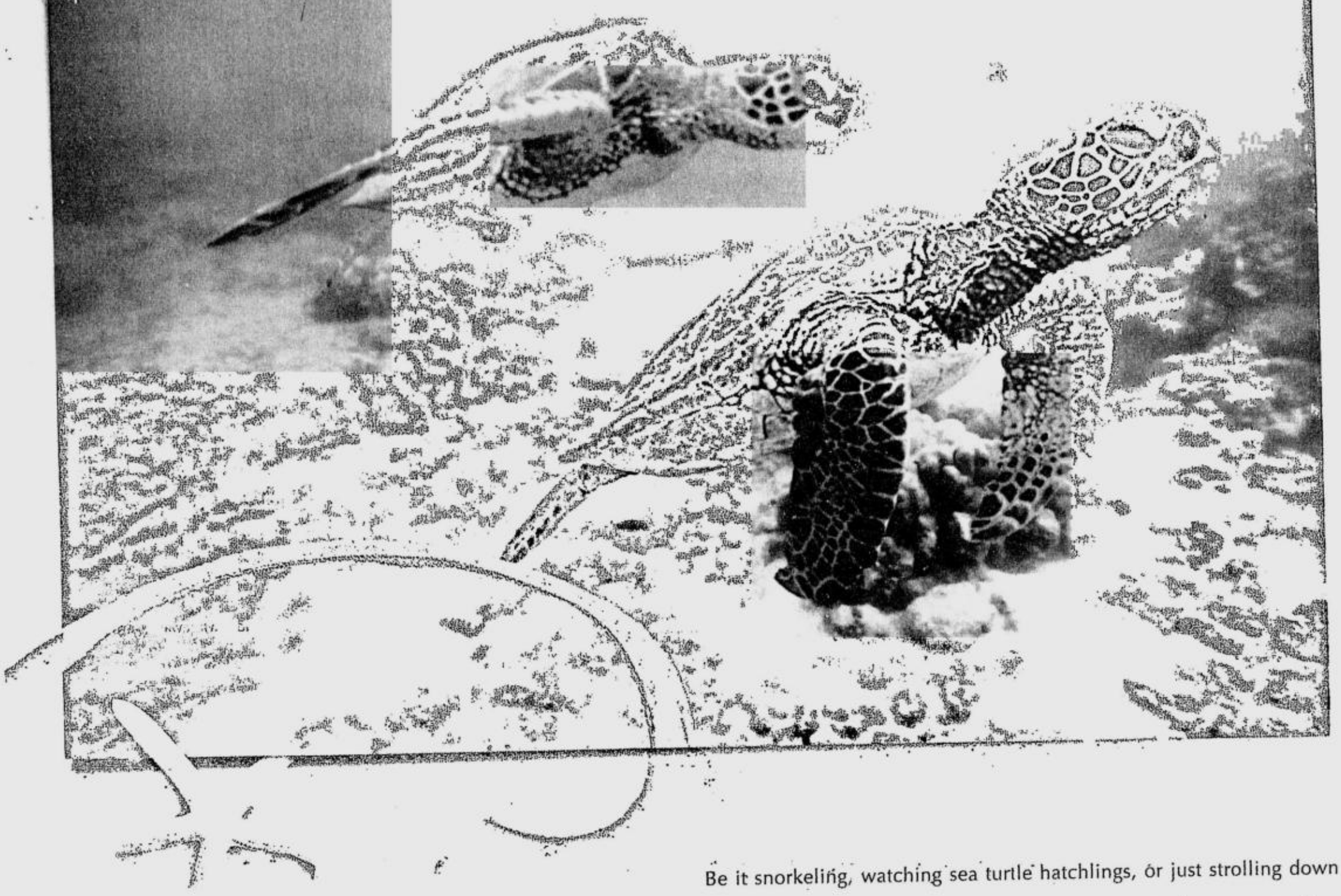

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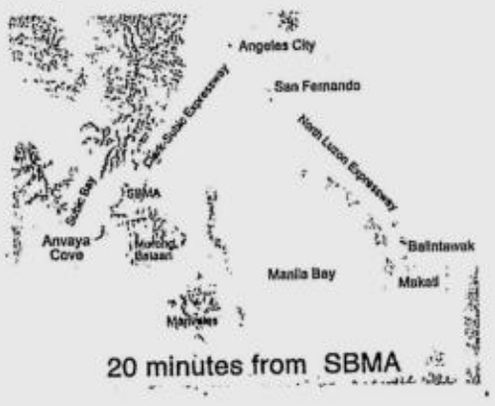

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ELECTION 07

LIKE A PIED PIPER. Kids followed the lead of Sen. Manny Villar as he stumped through the Divisoria market last week. ROGER MARGALLO

NEWLYWEDS Miguel Zubiri and Audrey sing their hearts out at Binmaley, Pangasinan. LYN RILLON

HANDS ON: Squealing students at the Capiz State University hang on to the hand of Noynoy Aquino. REM ZAMORA

QUICK STUDY: Relative newcomer party-list Rep. Teddy Casiño hits the Visayas in behalf of his party Bayan Muna, which was the party-list topnotcher in 2001 and 2004. In Cebu City, Casiño goes to the market. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

AN OPPOSITION SWEEP in the May election? The thought may have crossed the mind of reelectionist Sen. Ping Lacson as he drops in on a broom vendor at the Baguio public market to wrap up his three-day sortie in Northern Luzon. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SWAMPED: Alan Peter Cayetano autographs campaign material for his fans along Session Road in Baguio City on Monday. ELMER KRISTIAN DAUIGOY/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

VALENTINE'S EVE was also the start of the Senate campaign period. And Liza Maza and members of her party-list Gabriela took to the streets to romance the workers, streetsweepers, vendors and other working women with flowers and heart-shaped pins saying "Mahalin mo Ako (Love me)." AFP

Pangilinan confident that 'Noted' episode won't affect his poll chances

By Christian V. Esguerra

FRANCIS PANGILINAN IS CONvinced that he has overcome his "Noted" episode, which is widely believed by supporters of the late Fernando Poe Jr. to have botched the actor's chances in the 2004 presidential election.

Three weeks into his one-man campaign, the reelectionist senator believes that it is no longer political baggage, and that the general public now sees beyond the infamous line that blocked the opening of a total of 144 out 177 certificates of canvass (COCs).

Pangilinan yesterday noted his strong showing in recent surveys of senatorial hopefuls that placed him in the top five. A Pulse Asia survey covering Jan. 25 to 29 put him at third place.

"I think people are now more into what I have done and what positions I have taken," he told the INQUIRER in an interview at his Wack Wack residence.

He said he had gone around opposition territories, too, and had been warmly received by supporters of Poe and of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Pangilinan felt particularly welcome in Baseco, Tondo, which he partly credited to his quiet support of Gawad Kalinga.

With a donation of P40 million, he said, he was the biggest contributor among government officials and agencies to the groundbreaking housing project, which has also benefited the opposition bailiwick in Tondo.

PANGILINAN

No need for apology

Pangilinan figured prominently in the opposition's hate list after helping shoot down persistent motions to open questionable COCs in the 2004 election.

As co-presiding officer of the joint congressional canvass committee, he responded with "noted" to a total of 144 pleas by opposition lawyers.

"I have nothing to apologize [for]," he said yesterday. "Our decisions and actions were based on principles and on what we believe was right."

On hindsight, Pangilinan said it would have been a different story had the "Hello Garci" election fraud scandal surfaced at that time. He was referring to allegations that President Macapagal-Arroyo had manipulated the election results, primarily through then Elections Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

"What I would have wanted to happen was for that 'Hello Garci' thing to have been available [then] so we could have responded in the canvassing board, at least to set aside maybe one or whatever COC," he said.

'Principle'

Pangilinan joined the clamor for Ms Arroyo's resignation in 2005, after the tapped phone conversations allegedly between her and Garcillano were made public.

That, coupled with his previous decision to join Edsa People Power II that toppled Estrada, was precisely the reason he joined neither the administration's Team Unity nor the Genuine Opposition, he said.

"It's a matter of principle," he said. "I didn't go to the administration ticket precisely because we called for [Ms Arroyo's] resignation in 2005. Then why should I go to the opposition when in 2001, I also went marching at Edsa II?"

Still, Pangilinan appeared quite attractive to either camp's senatorial slate.

While there were never any "formal or informal negotiations" with GO, he said he had received offers from the administration "very difficult to turn down."

"There was an offer extremely difficult to resist—machinery, resources," he said without elaborating. "It was a big loss."

But Pangilinan said his decision to go solo was made quite easier by the "political capital" built on his six-year track record as a senator.

"Honestly, it would have been a different situation altogether," he said. "I would not have been as bold and decisive if my circumstances were different. That's the reality."

Elbow room

Disengaging himself from both the opposition and the administration appears to have provided Pangilinan more elbow room in a self-styled campaign for "alternative politics."

"This election will be a referendum on an alternative to the current crop of choices," he said. "There is public discontent over the way we are conducting our politics. If you look at the administration and the opposition, [you will find the view] confusing because there seems to be no distinction among candidates who have moved from one party to another."

Pangilinan said he was banking on a "silent majority" insulated from both Estrada and Arroyo followers.

He added: "My political future is now in the hands of the people. They will either accept or reject my candidacy. This is not my battle alone. This is the battle of people who want to move away from politics as usual, who want to change how we govern this nation."

Report ad violators, Comelec tells public

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SICKENED BY THE UBIQUITOUS television ad of a certain candidate? If you suspect the candidate has exceeded the maximum allowed airtime for candidates, you can call the Commission on Elections.

Comelec spokesperson James Arthur Jimenez said the poll body would entertain reports and tips from concerned viewers.

It can check the weekly logs submitted by television stations to see how many minutes a candidate has used up so far, he said.

At the same time, however, the Comelec is studying proposals that would in effect extend the air time allotted to each candidate.

The Fair Election Act allows at most 120 minutes of airtime for each candidate. The current interpretation of the provision refers to the total airtime used in all the networks put together.

Jimenez said the law was unclear if the limit referred to the total airtime used in all networks, or to the airtime bought from each television station.

The proposals to adjust the limit surprisingly did not come from candidates but from voters in remote areas who do not have access to all television networks, he said.

He said the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas also wanted a "different interpretation" of the provision, that is, to have the limit apply to each network and not to the total airtime.

The latter interpretation was applied in the 2004 elections, he said.

But the Comelec is also looking into the counter-arguments that say that the per station interpretation could be abused by candidates with more resources, to the detriment of those with meager budgets, Jimenez said.

The proposal is "under final review" and the commission will probably release its decision next week, he said.

So far no candidate has been punished for exceeding the allowed airtime for political ads. But then no candidate has exceeded the maximum yet, Jimenez said.

Should a candidate be shown by the Comelec's weekly monitoring to have exceeded the limit, that candidate will be put on notice and told to stop from further airing his or her political ads.

The Nielsen Media Research Philippines reported the other day that senatorial candidate Prospero Pichay had spent the most for TV ad spots in the first two weeks of the campaign, shelling out P33 million for a total of 46 minutes.

Reelectionists Manuel Villar and Ralph Recto spent slightly smaller amounts but for longer periods: Villar spent P30.29 million for 67 minutes while Recto spent P22.79 million for 47 minutes.

ELECTION 07

THE ONLY MUSLIM in the Team Unity lineup, Sultan of Sulu Jamalul Kiram III, woos the Pangasinense votes in Binmaley by announcing that his wife is their provincemate. LYN RILLON

THE CORY CRUSADERS, vintage "snap elections" of 1986, are back on the political landscape, this time to go all out for Cory's only son, Noynoy Aquino. They hold a powwow on Friday with their inspiration and their candidate in Dasmariñas Village, Makati City. RYAN LIM

LIKE A BRAVE OLD HAND on the political trail, the neophyte Sonia Roco is talking to students of the Capiz State University in Roxas City on Thursday. She's learning the ropes and picking up the right moves to win a Senate seat. REM ZAMORA

SUNSHINE parts the crowd to make way for her husband Cesar Montano as he works the crowd outside the Binmaley municipal hall in Pangasinan. LYN RILLON

BLESS YOU: Another version of kissing babies for Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan doing the rounds in Ongpin Street, Binondo. RYAN LIM

A RENDEZVOUS: Mike Defensor stays overnight at the Iloilo Grand Hotel on his way to Negros for a Team Unity sortie on March 2. While there, he meets with Rep. Rolex Suplico, which sparks speculations about the opposition congressman's political intentions. REM ZAMORA

Angara bares use of dirty money in poll campaigns

GAMBLING AND DRUG LORDS have become principal financiers of election campaigns in the country and a potent force affecting policy-making, according to reelectionist Sen. Edgardo Angara.

Angara said the inclusion of dirty money in the campaign kitty could have been avoided had Congress approved his proposed electoral reforms bills.

These were the Political Reform Act and the Campaign Finance Reform Act which seek to provide state subsidy to political parties.

"That's part of my plan to bring it out into the open because right now, the principal financiers are gambling lords and some drug drug lords. Now it's dirty money powering politics in our country and ultimately the one determining policy-making," he added.

Angara admitted that the use of dirty money in campaigns was "normal" and has been going on since time immemorial. *Cynthia D. Balana*

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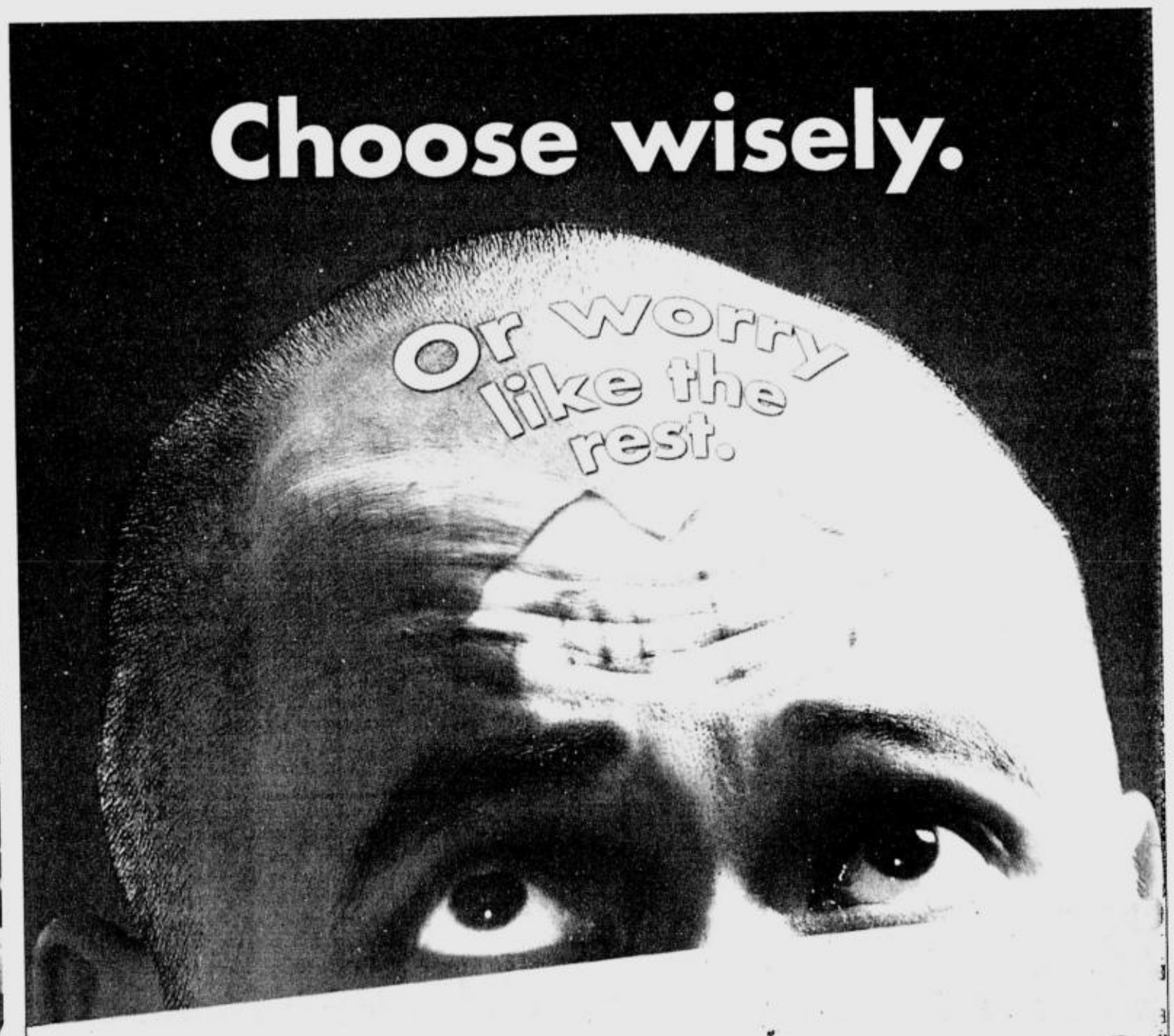

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Court reverses Misamis ex-mayor's murder conviction

By Julie M. Aurelio

A FORMER MISAMIS TOWN mayor who was convicted of the murder of his political rival in 1992 has been ordered released by the Court of Appeals which reversed late last week a lower court's ruling sentencing him to life imprisonment.

In 2001, Rey Yap, the former mayor of Sapang Dalaga, Misamis Occidental, was found guilty by the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 41 of masterminding the assassination of Victorio "Boy" Cebedo, who was then mayor of Rizal, Zamboanga del Norte, two weeks before the May 1992 elections, and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Yap was a known political rival of the Cebedo family.

But last Feb. 23, the Twelfth Division of the appellate court reversed the life sentence meted on Yap, saying the guilt of the accused has not been proven due to the conflicting accounts of the shooting.

In a 27-page decision penned by associate justice Myrna Dimaranan Vidal, the appellate court directed New Bilibid Prisons director Vicente Vinarao to release Yap, along with his co-accused Joselito Lacuna and PO2 Nestor Mananquil Jr.

"The guilt of the accused named has not been proved to be a moral certainty, the judgment appealed is hereby reversed and set aside," the court said.

Other criminal cases

Vinarao yesterday confirmed to the INQUIRER that following his acquittal, Yap was transferred to the Manila City Jail (MCJ) on Wednesday upon the request of his relatives.

"He is still facing other criminal cases, so he could not be totally set free yet," Vinarao said.

The NBP director said Yap has five other pending cases before regional trial courts in Oroquieta City, Manila and Muntinlupa City, including a graft case at the Ombudsman.

In 2001, Yap and his brother Roy were found guilty of masterminding the assassination of Cebedo.

Cebedo, a candidate of the Nationalist People's Coalition, was shot and killed during a rally in Barangay Birayan, Rizal town on April 29, 1992.

The victim and Roy Yap were contesting the Rizal mayoralty race.

Cebedo's brother, Perfecto, ran in his place after the assassination and won. But Perfecto was assassinated in 2002, when the Yaps were already serving their life terms.

Lacuna and Juditho Cara, the self-confessed gunman, were also sentenced to life by the Manila RTC.

Two former policemen who tried to help the gunmen escape—SPO4 Hilario Delgado and Mananquil—were found guilty as accessories and given six to 12 years in jail.

Cara had pointed to Rey as the brains behind the killing of Cebedo.

Conflicting accounts

But in its decision, the appellate court pointed out that Cara gave two conflicting accounts of the shooting, first pointing to Roy as the one who paid him to kill Cebedo and only implicated Rey in his second affidavit.

"Cara is not a credible witness as the prosecution wishes to portray him to be," the court added.

The identity of Cara as the self-confessed gunman was disputed by an eyewitness, Gonzalu Yu, the running mate of Cebedo in the May 1992 elections.

Yu had testified that he saw the gunman at close range, and said it was not Cara.

A ballistics expert from the National Bureau of Investigation also questioned Cara's claim that he shot Cebedo from 12 feet away.

The NBI expert said "the smudging on the wounds of the victim necessarily indicates the deadly shots were fired at short range."

Associate justice Vidal also noted that Narciso Bulay-og, who was mentioned by Cara as one of his back-ups in Cebedo's murder, has been dead for nearly two years.

Now it can be told: Why GO is unraveling

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even before the campaign period officially began on Feb. 12.

Herman Tiu-Laurel, deputy secretary general of ousted President Joseph Estrada's Pwersa ng Masa, recalled that the Wednesday Group started floating the idea of a "third force" late last year.

A third slate would have diminished the chances of the opposition to get a grip on the Senate.

In an effort to maintain one opposition ticket, Estrada "reached out" to the Wednesday Group, Tiu-Laurel said, adding:

"I think that one of the achievements of Erap is that until now there is no third force."

As it turned out, Villar (of the Nacionalista Party) and Pangilinan (of the Liberal Party faction headed by Sen. Franklin Drilon) became "guest candidates" of GO on Feb. 10. Pangilinan, however, has since been dropped.

Arroyo and Recto joined the administration's Team Unity.

All roads led to Erap

When Estrada was granted a New Year's Day furlough at his mother's house in Greenhills, San Juan, practically all opposition politicians were there—indicating, according to a highly placed source, the pre-election high of the United Opposition (UNO).

In the ensuing days, "the execom (executive committee) suddenly grew, and the meetings that used to be held in a small conference room had to be transferred to a bigger hall," said the source, who asked not to be named for lack of authority to speak on the record.

"New faces" were suddenly joining the picture, like Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., "who had never attended an UNO meeting," the source said.

The big meetings were held at the conference room of Makati Mayor and UNO president Jejomar Binay, and the small ones, at the office of former Sen. Ernesto "Boy" Herrera on Roxas Boulevard.

Cayetano said the opposition also "waited" for the outcome of Speaker Jose de Venecia's spirited attempt to transform the Senate and the House into a constitutional assembly to amend the 1987 Charter.

The attempt was officially shot down in December—a development that was seen as a rejection of President Macapagal-Arroyo and a boost to the opposition's chances of victory in the May elections.

Strongest in January

Cayetano said the opposition was "strongest in the second week of January, when everybody wanted to be part of its senatorial slate."

At one point, said another source, the list had almost 40 names.

Even civil society was consulted for "names," according to Corazon "Dinky" Soliman, Ms Arroyo's resigned social welfare secretary.

Soliman said that after consulting with various groups, she and her colleagues submitted a list that included Rep. Etta Rosales, Rep. Neric Acosta, former Rep. Butch Abad, detained Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV, Amina Rasul, and even Adel Tamano, now GO spokesperson.

Yet another source privy to the details said the names on the list were "considered" but that Abad, Rasul and Tamano begged off, and Rosales was bumped off because some opposition leaders found her "too red."

Cayetano said some names were on either/or status, like the cases of Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and his aunt, former Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta, and of Estrada son San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito and Estrada's wife Sen. Luisa Ejercito, who later chose not to seek reelection.

JV Ejercito himself eventually decided to run again for San Juan mayor.

Through all that, "we didn't really know where LDP (Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino) was," Cayetano said.

Wrestling with demons

He said he was surprised when former Senators Oreta and Vicente "Tito" Sotto took their oath as members of the Nationalist People's Coalition.

The two have since joined the Team Unity ticket, along with LDP stalwart Sen. Edgardo Angara.

The exit of the so-called ASO (Angara-Sotto-Oreta) triumvirate shows yet another side of an organization wrestling with the demons of the past.

Rez Cortez, a member of UNO and leader of the National Council of Concerned Volunteers (NCCV), said Angara, Sotto and Oreta "bungled" several activities during the 2004 presidential campaign of Estrada's best friend, the late actor Fernando Poe Jr., against Ms Arroyo.

The NCCV is composed of over 20 groups who campaigned for Poe.

Cortez said the Poe groups would "campaign against" Angara, Sotto and Oreta.

But as for Pangilinan, Cortez said: "We will not campaign for or against Kiko. We are campaigning for 11 GO candidates plus one—Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan."

According to Cortez, many Poe followers were still "hurt" by Pangilinan's behavior during the national canvass of votes nearly three years ago:

Still hurting

"When Kiko said 'noted' for every instance of cheating cited during the national canvass, he was right in saying that it was the lawful thing to do. But after saying 'noted,' he should have referred those COCs (certificate of canvass) to a committee to verify these with the ERs (election returns). But he did not. So what did that mean? He was part of the cheating; he was part of the party that robbed FPJ of his votes."

Cortez said it would have been easy for them to take Pangilinan into their fold, "if only he showed a little remorse."

He cited the remorse that another GO candidate, former Sen. Loren Legarda, supposedly showed when she joined the opposition as Poe's running mate in 2004 despite her role in Estrada's impeachment trial in 2000-2001.

"Pero wala, nagmalaki pa, nagmayabang pa (But no. He even acted arrogantly)," Cortez said of Pangilinan.

Ernesto Maceda, a former senator and a member of the UNO executive committee, said Cortez "has all the right to say what he wants to say, but he only speaks for the FPJ groups."

The Poe factor remains significant because "a major campaign issue is the legitimacy of President Arroyo," Maceda said.

It's a view shared by Soliman, who said the Poe factor "should be taken in the context of cheating, the 'Hello Garci' [election fraud scandal] and the legitimacy of [Ms Arroyo]."

Money matters

Cayetano said the opposition was in financial straits.

Indeed, the limited resources are showing.

In one of the rooms at the GO headquarters on Shaw Boulevard, five black plastic bags and two jute sacks were bunched in a corner. Inside the bags and sacks were packets of biscuits and candies intended for distribution during rallies.

At the back of the building, boxes of bottled water were piled along a wall. Parked in the area were a dozen audiovisual vans to be sent to remote areas to show films and videos about Estrada and the GO candidates.

"We are surviving on individual strengths. There is a lot of idealism; there is also a lot of pragmatism," Cayetano said. But he said he believed that the opposition still had the upper hand: "We believe that the moral issue is on our side. That's all that we have."

GO not ruling out naming bet for No. 12

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The LP-Drilon faction accepted GO's decision to drop Pangilinan from its slate without bolting the coalition.

Potential complication

It has another candidate, Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, in the GO ticket.

But Drilon also reminded GO leaders not to get a replacement candidate in compliance with their "agreement...that there will only be 11 senatorial candidates [to] be carried by the GO campaign machinery."

He said that the LP was determined to support both Pangilinan and Aquino, and that having a 13th candidate in the GO slate would "complicate" the situation.

But he did not say what action his group would take if GO found a replacement for Pangilinan.

"We expect GO and former Sen. Ernesto Maceda and Mayor Binay to respect our agreement that GO will field only 11 candidates [to allow] the LP to campaign without hindrance for the candidacy of Sen. Kiko Pangilinan as its 12th candidate," Drilon said.

Binay said he and Drilon understood each other's position.

"Frank and I are personal friends. *Hindi na kami mag-iisahan* (We won't pull a fast one on each other)," the mayor said.

Personal friends

"We will just campaign for 11 candidates," he added.

San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, the outgoing GO campaign manager, said the camp had received feelers from "many" senatorial aspirants who wanted to join the GO ticket.

Maceda, who is also part of the GO executive committee, said member-groups were rooting for detained ex-Sen. Gregorio Honasan and actor Richard Gomez, among others.

Honasan and Gomez are currently waging independent senatorial campaigns.

Ejercito said the selection of another candidate would take "a process, this being a coalition."

Not so fast

But Pangilinan can ride on the LP only if he issues a disclaimer that only the Drilon faction is supporting his reelection.

Through a spokesperson, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said it would be "untruthful" for Pangilinan to claim in his promotion materials that he was being backed by the LP when it was only the Drilon faction that was backing him.

Noynoy Aquino said on Tuesday that the LP was in support of Pangilinan.

Atienza said that the courts had yet to decide on the power struggle between him and Drilon in the LP, and that it would be presumptuous and misleading for anyone to claim the party's full support.

If Pangilinan insists on using the LP in his campaign materials, Atienza said, he would file a complaint against the candidate with the Commission on Elections for misleading the public.

According to Team Unity senatorial candidate Michael Defensor, the LP-Atienza faction, to which he belongs, accounts for 1,450 of the 1,500 members of one of the country's oldest political parties.

Get real

Defensor said Pangilinan was being "unrealistic" in insisting that he was neither an opposition nor an administration candidate.

"All of us should get real. There is nothing perfect in this world, not in politics or in marriage. I don't think anybody can claim to be perfect," said Defensor, who was apparently unimpressed by his estranged partymate's attempt "to get the best of both worlds."

Pangilinan is being vilified by the loyalists of the late Fernando Poe Jr. for famously shutting the door on all complaints in the canvassing of the votes for the 2004 presidential election with his "Noted."

On the other hand, Team Unity members have not forgotten his call in 2005 for President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation.

Team Unity campaign manager Reli German said that while Pangilinan was better off not running with a team whose ideals he did not share, "it would be tough to run as an independent." *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

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Children learn ABCs ...

From page A1

them foster transparency and accountability in the government in the future.

These values will be taught through the Graft and Corruption Prevention Education (GCPE) Teaching Exemplars, a set of teaching modules focusing on honesty, integrity, professionalism and simple living.

Not even box of crayon

Lessons like the importance of never taking home government supplies, even a small box of crayons, of choosing fruits and vegetables over junk food, and of faithfully submitting report cards to parents will be tackled alongside Makabayan subjects such as Social Studies, English and Sibika at Kultura in elementary and high schools.

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez yesterday turned over some 200,000 copies of the GCPE books to Education Secretary Jesli Lapus at the Ponciano Bernardo High School in Cubao, Quezon City.

The Office of the Ombudsman will be assisted by the Millennium Challenge Corp. and the United States Agency for International Development in distributing the books to 44,412 public schools across the country under the RP-US Strategic Grant Agreement.

Also present at the turnover ceremony were Jon Lindborg, USAID mission director, and Ambassador Alistair MacDonald of the European Commission.

'World's first'

"These are special teaching tools ... an investment for our future leaders that will pave the way for a more honest and accountable government," Gutierrez said in a speech.

The GCPE books—a first in the world, according to Gutierrez—were first conceptualized by the Office of the Ombudsman in 1992 to integrate positive values into the curricular activities of students through the Department of Education.

The first edition of the teaching modules was first printed and distributed in 1999. But the Office of the Ombudsman had to revise the teaching tools in 2004 in order to conform with the new Basic Education Curriculum issued by the DepEd.

Now, the revised edition consisting of 52 modules is ready to do its work—inspire change in the country, which has long been crippled by poverty due to corruption.

Billions lost

Gutierrez said that over the years, the government had lost about P21 billion which could have built 63,000 new classrooms, and P520 million which could have translated into more textbooks and financial grants to poor students.

She expressed the hope that the implementation of the teaching modules in the schools, with the aid of the DepEd, would help in the battle against corruption.

In its barometer in 2006, the global corruption watchdog Transparency International ranked the Philippines the second most corrupt in the Asia-Pacific region.

In 2005, the Philippines tied with Afghanistan, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Libya, Nepal and Uganda in 117th place as the "cleanest" among 159 countries.

The United Nations Development Program estimated in 2004 that $1.8 billion was lost to corruption every year. The figure represents 13 percent of the Philippines' annual budget, according to the UNDP report.

Between 1980 and 2000, the Philippines lost $48 billion to graft, according to a World Bank study made seven years ago.

A number of students of the Ponciano Bernardo High School seemed receptive to the new program.

"Many of us teenagers have forgotten the core values that will make us good citizens, so I really think the [program] will help us a lot," said a junior, Jerald Milante.

Jannaire Neneria, 15, said she believed that the country was "topping the charts" in the corruption department and that the fundamental values which would help them become responsible and productive government officials in the future should be instilled in them early in life.

"If we realize now how important it is to come to class on time, then when we become government officials, we will hold the same value for punctuality," she told the INQUIRER.

Dare to ask. Be an Inquirer.

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Aussie warning: Don't count JI out yet

MILITANT GROUP JEMAAH ISLAMIYAH may have gone quiet but its radical wing is keen to mount new attacks and poses the biggest threat to Southeast Asian security, Australia said on Friday ahead of a security summit in Indonesia.

Last month Canberra issued an alert that Indonesian militants might be in the advanced stages of planning attacks in restive Central Sulawesi, the scene of recent sectarian bloodletting between Indonesian Muslims and Christians.

And as foreign affairs and security ministers and police chiefs from Malaysia, Australia, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand prepared to meet in Jakarta on Monday, Canberra cautioned that Jemaah Islamiyah was not in retreat despite a quiet 2006.

"In terms of whether JI is still the most significant threat, I think we would probably say yes," a senior Australian security official who could not be named told journalists.

Splintered

But focusing on the JI name, he said, was not as important as it once was, confirming private analyst assessments that the organization had splintered amid scores of arrests by Indonesian security forces.

"It's the individuals who carry the capacity and the intention, and they can morph into other organizations and they can move off and work in different ways," the official said.

"We would still say JI is a serious threat, but let's not take our eyes off other groups."

Next week's meeting brings together the six countries hit hardest by attacks mounted by JI since 2000, including multiple attacks in Bali and Jakarta between 2002 and 2005.

Indonesian foreign affairs spokesman Desra Percaya told reporters in Jakarta the meeting would not be aimed at "one or two organizations."

"We will discuss the threat of terrorism in a larger context. So, anything can be discussed. We are not ruling out any of the possibilities," he said, adding that issues on border control and database sharing would be key topics.

The meeting would focus on how regional governments respond to radicalism and terrorist attacks causing mass casualties, Australia's Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said.

Good years

"The last two years have been good years, not perfect years, but they have been good years in Southeast Asia in terms of counterterrorism," Downer told parliament.

Another Australian official said unconventional threats the summit would discuss included "exotic attacks" such as bioterrorism.

"In the ongoing background noise on this issue, the intent or the desire to pursue or examine those options is still happening," he said.

Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim country, has been hit in recent years by a series of bomb blasts blamed on Islamic militants.

Most attacks against Western targets have taken place in the capital, Jakarta, and on the island of Bali, where a total of 92 Australians died in two separate bombings in 2002 and 2005.

Around 85 percent of Indonesia's 220 million people follow Islam. Most Indonesian Muslims are moderates but there is a radical fringe that has been increasingly vocal and media-savvy. *Reuters*

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
Region XII
Provincial Agrarian Reform Office
Kidapawan City

February 14, 2007

Notice of Coverage

The following landholdings in the province of Cotabato, the landowners of which are considered absentee, are covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP):

Land Owners	Title No.	Lot & Survey No.	Area	Location
1. Heracleo Suguilon	P-45627	84, Pls-715	9.9799	Meocan, Arakan
2. Sixto Fajardo	T-59711	47, Pls-715	5.0063	Malibatuan, Ara.
3. Sixto Fajardo	T-8641	131 Bsd-20417	2.8647	Salvacion, Ara.
4. Samson Cezar	P-51430	351, Pls-715	9.9885	Malibatuan, Ara.
5. Alejandro Cezar	P-51428	352, Pls-715	7.4935	Malibatuan, Ara.
6. Protacio Chavez	P-40060	179, Pls-826	9.0619	Badiangan, Ara.
7. Abdon Lepiten	P-25223	6760, Pls-59	71.1034	Labu-o, P. Roxas
8. Bernabe Barrios	T-69574	159, Pls-556	9.9994	Tibao, Mlang
9. Bernabe Barrios	P-38546	283, Bsd-20417	4.4323	Kamarahan, Roxas
10. Bernabe Barrios	T-54087	2285-A, Psd-12-000292	5.0127	Buluan, P. Roxas
11. Bernabe Barrios	T-63102	164, Bsd-20417	4.7003	Salvacion, P. Roxas
12. Bernabe Barrios	T-65391	237-B, Psd-168712	3.9037	Kamarahan, P. Roxas
13. Justiniano Barrios	V-7432	124, Bsd-20419	4.7912	Amas, Kid. City
14. Justiniano Barrios	P-52340	C, Ces-12-0000009-D	2.9779	Gayola, Kid. City

(Sgd.) ENGR. MARION Y. ABELLA, CESO V
Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer II

(PDI – Feb. 24 & Mar. 03 & 10, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
Region XII
Provincial Agrarian Reform Office
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November 30, 2006

Notice of Coverage

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2. Maxima Diaz	P-34804	200, Pls-59	18.0739	Amazon, Kid.
3. Candida Diaz	T-44000	H-187101	17.7300	Kalaisan, Kid.
4. Leo Rellin	T-62671	114, C-2, Psd-12-00392	12.6846	Kalaisan, Kid.
5. Leo Rellin	T-62670	114, C-1, Psd-12-00392	26.000	Kalaisan, Kid.
6. GAMI, Inc.	T-53778	136, C, Csd-5055	3.6588	Katipunan,Kid.
7. GAMI, Inc.	T-28912	136-A, Csd-5055	21.4436	Katipunan, Kid.
8. Sultan Omar Kiram	T-23942	Si-V-22431	50.2012	Sikitan, Kid.
	T-24137	Lot 139-B, Psd-56193	24.6932	Sikitan, Kid.
	T-24138	Lot 139-A, Psd-56193	24.6932	Sikitan, Kid.
9. Rolando Mendoza	P-36699	76, Bsd-11021	12.4205	Macebolig, Kid.
10. Pacifico Mendoza, Jr.	P-35742	32, Bsd-11021	12.6483	Macebolig, Kid.
11. Eduardo Mendoza	P-35743	106, 98, 97, Bsd-11021	11.0188	Macebolig, Kid.
12. Eliseo Ferrer	P-32964	407, Pls-715	8.7970	Meocan, Arakan
13. Heracleo Ferrer	P-45627	84, Pls-715	9.9799	Meocan, Arakan
14. Gabriel Cajela	V-11325	879, Pls-498	8.9897	Doroluman, Ara.
15. Leon Dela Cruz	V-11324	882, Pls-498	5.5399	do
16. Sinanga Masangkay	V-11271	912, Pls-498	9.7595	do

(Sgd.) ENGR. MARION Y. ABELLA, CESO V
Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer II

(PDI – Feb. 24 & Mar. 03, 2007)

Gov't, Moro rebs ready to resolve talks impasse

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT HOPES TO resume stalled peace talks with the country's largest Muslim rebel group before national elections on May 14, its chief peace negotiator said yesterday.

Negotiations to end nearly 40 years of conflict that has killed more than 120,000 people have been stalled since May 2006 over the size and wealth of a proposed ancestral homeland for 3 million Muslims in the south.

Informal understanding

"The impasse in the peace talks had been resolved," Silvestre Afable, Manila's chief government peace negotiator, told a news conference after signing an agreement with Japan's development agency to pour economic projects into Mindanao.

"There's already an informal understanding on the political aspect of the negotiations but the issue on territory remained unresolved."

Afable declined to elaborate on the consensus points agreed by two sides, but was confident that formal talks would soon resume as all parties, including Malaysia, which has been brokering the talks since 2001, agreed on a schedule.

Afable, former communications director at the office of President Macapagal Arroyo, said the talks could resume before the May 14 mid-term elections although the two sides had already met three times for "backroom discussions."

"There's some movement but we could not say there's already an agreement unless we sign something on paper," Mohaqher Iqbal, the rebels' chief negotiator, told Reuters from his base in Mindanao.

"We're seeing some encouraging signs because there were some improvements in the government's new proposal to expand areas to be covered by the proposed Bangsamoro homeland."

Assessment of political situation

Iqbal said the two sides were due to hold informal meetings within the month to assess the political situation and ask the Malaysian government to set a date for the next round of formal peace negotiations.

Since 2004, a 60-member monitoring team from Malaysia, Libya and Brunei has been deployed in Mindanao to sustain the July 2003 truce between security forces and MILF rebels, preventing some skirmishes from escalating into a full-blown shooting war. *Reuters*

3 kidnappers killed; victim saved

POLICE IN CENTRAL LUZON LAST NIGHT rescued alive the son of a wealthy Filipino-Chinese businessman and killed three of his kidnappers in Marilao, Bulacan.

The rescue of Eric Tan came three hours after he was abducted at 6:30 p.m. in Valenzuela City, south of Marilao, according to Chief Supt. Ismael Rafanan.

Investigators initially identified the kidnapping syndicate as the Dyaryo Group, believed to be tied up to a bigger group led by a dismissed policeman, who is now on the police's wanted list. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Outsourcing breeding new class of smokers, boozers

THE PHILIPPINES' OUTSOURCING INdustry is generating billions of dollars in revenues but executives fear employees are turning to caffeine, cigarettes and booze to deal with unsociable hours and demanding customers.

"I worry when I go to the call centers that we are spawning a generation of chain smoking, coffee addicts or worse, chain smoking beer drinkers, Rosalie Montenegro, senior vice president of the Call Center Business Group under Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) told Reuters yesterday.

"It is a reality, because the social support has not kept up with the growth of job creation."

Around 200,000 people are employed in the Philippines' outsourcing sector, many of them hired straight out of college.

Quick access to a monthly salary—entry level wages have risen as much as 69 percent since 2003—and an open office plan full of twentysomethings creates a hectic social life.

But the strange working hours—9 p.m. till 6 a.m. to cater for the US market—is wearying and going for a post-shift drink to unwind means boozing at daybreak.

Aside from modern offices, Montenegro said investments must be made in what she calls "social infrastructure" to promote the well-being of the industry's employees, who are often spotted nabbing a quick cigarette outside their offices.

"We need to invest in social wellness of our kids because the next generation should be the highest focus going forward," she said.

Montenegro said PLDT, the country's biggest phone company and a medium-sized player in the outsourcing sector, was considering building a country club for its call center agents.

Montenegro said she hoped other outsourcing companies would support such a facility.

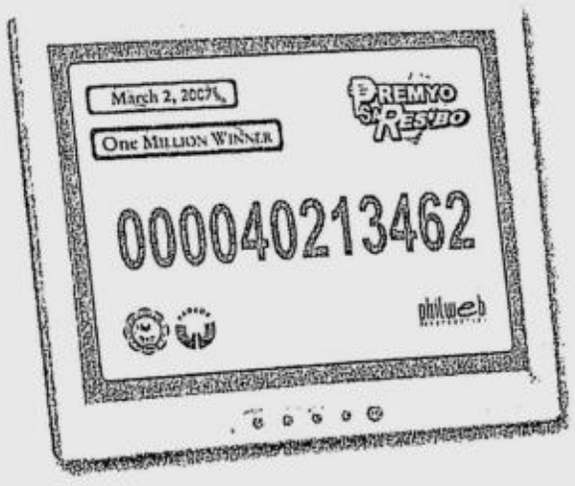
She said health and wellness providers, like spas, gyms and fitness centers should also be encouraged to extend their operating hours to cater to the needs of stressed workers.

The Philippines, with a large pool of English speakers and a strong cultural affinity with the United States, is developing as a viable alternative to India in the global outsourcing market. *Reuters*

PREMYO SA RESIBO

PAGCOR

Congratulations to our 7th Millionaire! for the year 2007!



February 23, 2007
Draw Millionaire!

BIR Deputy Commissioner Legal and Inspection Group Mr. Gregorio Cabantac awards the **P1 Million** check to **Ms. Maria Theresa D. Salalac**, housewife from **Caloocan City**. Assisting in the awarding ceremony is Mr. July Pena, PAGCOR representative.

The next **Premyo Sa Resibo** draw will be on **March 9, 2007** and every Friday thereafter.
Draw will be aired on ABC 5 at 10:30pm.
Official Receipts from **February 1, 2007** to **March 8, 2007** are qualified for this draw.

Premyo Sa Resibo Instructions :
Type-in the text message in this format:
PSR<space>TIN of establishment<asterisk>Receipt Number<asterisk>Amount
text to 9777 for single entries or
text to 9778 for multiple entries. (Smart and Globe only)
Available to all Smart, Globe and Sun subscribers.

powered by: philweb

For Inquiries, Call 338-9777 or visit www.premyosaresibo.com.ph
For Help, Text PSR <space> HELP to 9777 or 9778

135th Founding Anniversary

WEDDING IN THE SWAMPS: Mayor Edward Hagedorn joins one hundred couples in the wedding march before the unique mass wedding and mangrove-replanting [illegible] Hagedorn shares [illegible] story in Yahoo on [illegible] Day.

Puerto Princesa, Hagedorn lead fight vs global warming

Balayong Festival highlights environmental, beautification drive

ON ITS 135th foundation day, Puerto Princesa City takes on the biggest threat on Mother Earth -- global warming -- with renewed vigor in its environmental protection and enhancement programs.

Highlighting this year's anniversary celebration is the Balayong Festival symbolizing the city's world-renowned environmental protection and beautification campaign.

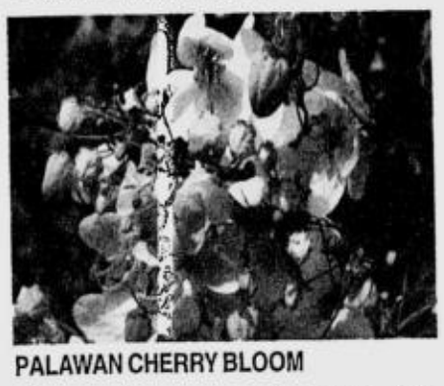
"Balayong" is the Cuyunon colloquial for the Palawan cherry tree, which is crowned with quaint, light pink blossoms. Endemic to the island, the Palawan cherry livens up the local scenery in the months of February and March.

In 2005, Mrs. Ellen M. Hagedorn, wife of Mayor Edward Hagedorn, together with the womenfolk of Puerto Princesa, came together to replant this extraordinary cherry blossom tree into the consciousness of the populace. They led the planting of a thousand Balayong seedlings at the panoramic Santa Monica Heights Nature Park beside City Hall.

As serendipity would have it, the founding anniversary of the city falls on the fourth of March, in time with the Balayong's blooming. Inspired by the providential circumstances and events, the City Council unanimously enacted Ordinance No. 288, declaring the March 4, Puerto Princesa's foundation day, as Balayong Festival day.

The latest in the long line of innovative projects to protect the environment against such threats as global warming is the tricycle reduction and fuel conversion program.

A GIANT CLAM is prepared for relocation by Mayor Hagedorn and two divers.



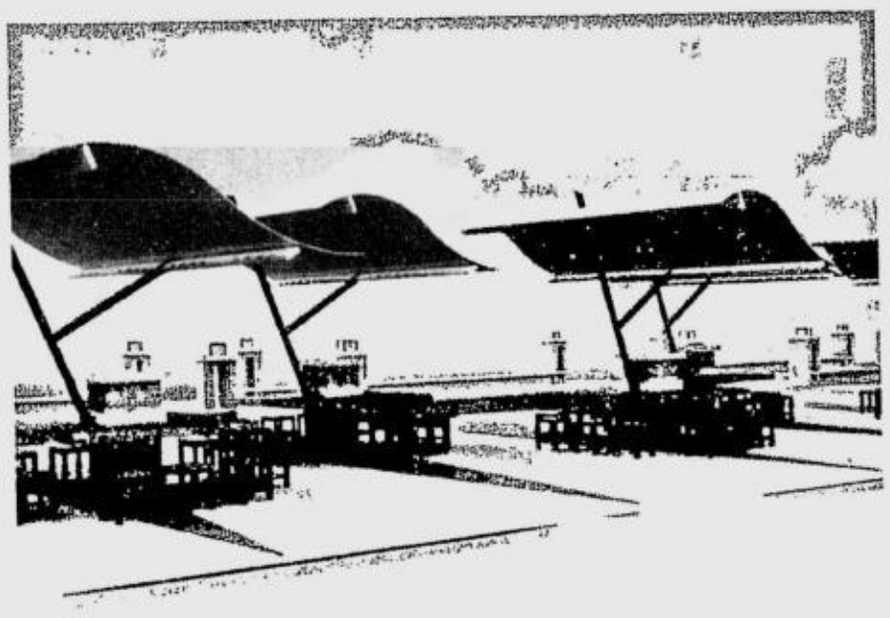
PALAWAN CHERRY BLOOM

The city's 4,000 tricycles will be reduced in half to 2,000 units, which will be converted from gasoline mix to liquefied petroleum gas (LPG).

The city has also expanded its mangrove replanting program, highlighted this year by a Valentine's Day mass wedding in the city's endangered mangrove areas.

Another environmental project is the relocation of endangered giant clam species locally known as taclobo (*tridacna gigas)* to a special Tridacna Garden in the Santa Lucia Bay.

On the coastline of Puerto Princesa Bay, once blighted by a colony of informal settlers, is the postcard-pretty modern baywalk. The informal settlers have been relocated to a resettlement site and provided with modern housing and community services.



TAKING SHAPE along the Puerto Princesa Bay coastline is the Baywalk and the promenade (below)

LOOKING LIKE a modern resort is the townhouse complex for fisherfolk relocated from what used to be an informal settlers' community which is now the Baywalk site.

A history of 'firsts' in cleaning and greening

It was on the fourth of March in 1872 when Spanish colonizers set foot on a cliff overlooking the harbor and decided it was a good place for a settlement. The first Mass was held there and on that very same spot the Immaculate Conception Cathedral now stands.

In 1894, the Spanish government declared Puerto Princesa as the most orderly and cleanest town in the country. In 1994, a hundred years later, Puerto Princesa received the first national Clean and Green Award as the country's cleanest and greenest city.

The town was converted into a city on January 1, 1970 by virtue of Republic Act No. 5906 and amended by P.D. 437. On February 23, 1994, R.A. 7684 declared March 4 as a special non-working holiday.

Puerto Princesa City has since become:

- The first Philippine local government unit to receive the Global 500 Roll of Honor Award from the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) during the 1977 World Environment Day. And Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn became the first Filipino leader who made environmental protection the centerpiece of local governance.
- The first city to receive the prestigious Macli-ing Dulag Environmental Achievement Award.
- The first to receive the Award of Excellence as the Cleanest and Greenest Component City in the Philippines (1994) and the National Hall of Fame Award (1996) for winning it for three consecutive years.
- The first LGU to receive the Development Management Award of Asia by the Asian Institute of Management in cooperation with the Far Eastern Economic Review and the Management Association of the Philippines.
- The first LGU to be given management and control of a national park (Saint Paul Subterranean River National Park) by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. After six years, this undereground river park was declared by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site;
- The first LGU to construct and operate an integrated sanitary landfill and water treatment facility.
- The first LGU outside Metro Manila to set up a cyanide detection testing center to ensure that no fish caught with cyanide is sold to the public.

ADVT

SIGHTSEEING SECRETARY
Foreign Secretary Alberto G. Romulo visits the sublime structures in Angkor Wat, the largest and best-preserved temple in Angkor, Cambodia. He is attending the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) foreign ministers meeting in the Siem Reap province. AFP

Sonia twits truant mates

By Norman Bordadora

ILOILO CITY—SENATORIAL candidate Sonia Roco showed her disapproval when told that the campaign sorties in Aklan and Antique scheduled yesterday were canceled because her fellow candidates in the Genuine Opposition had "prior engagements."

The widow of the late Sen. Raul Roco noticed that some candidates would "absent" themselves once too often from GO's campaign resulting in the postponement or cancellation of sorties.

"I'm the one who's always saying, 'I'm sorry, I'm late.' But nobody seems to be saying, 'I'm sorry, I'm absent," said Roco, a firm disciplinarian and a former English teacher.

Understandably, she wouldn't name names.

"Whenever I see [one of GO's campaign organizers], I would ask: 'What will be canceled today?'" said Roco with a smile, although she wasn't entirely kidding.

Roco was informed Thursday night that yesterday's sorties in Aklan and Antique had been canceled as some of the candidates had to leave for "previous engagements."

Nevertheless, Roco decided to push through with her campaign in Antique. Another GO candidate, former Sen. Loren Legarda, also went ahead with her own meetings in Aklan.

"Cancelled sorties give the impression that we're disorganized. But it's also good for security since [those who wish us harm] wouldn't know where we will be," Roco said.

Among those who went with Roco during the first GO campaign in the Visayas were Legarda, former Senators Anna Dominique "Nikki" Coseteng and John Osmeña, Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and lawyer Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III.

They were accompanied by San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito, GO campaign manager who will soon be replaced by Sen. Sergio Osmeña III.

After the successful sortie in Roxas City in Capiz, the postponement of the Aklan and Antique sorties might have been a let down for Roco.

"The turnout in Capiz was good," she said. "People were quite enthusiastic when they came out to see us. The local leaders were also quite supportive."

A thousand people showed up at GO's dialog with the people held at one of Roxas City's convention venues.

In comparison, GO's Western Visayas kick-off in Iloilo City last Wednesday was lackluster. The GO rally at the provincial capitol was cancelled, and there were less people in the streets during the motorcade.

"We also can't blame the local leaders. We made the mistake of going around at 2 p.m. The people were still at work so who'd meet us during the motorcade?" Roco said.

Aussies want RP bananas quarantined first

AN AUSTRALIAN STUDY ON IMporting Philippine bananas calls for strict quarantine measures before allowing the fruit entry, but the Filipino exporters have not been given the green light to start shipping.

"The central thrust, I guess, of the revised report is that Philippine bananas may enter Australia subject to certain specific quarantine measures," Pablo Kang, counselor for political and economic affairs at the Australian Embassy in Manila, told a news conference yesterday.

The Philippines, the world's second-largest banana shipper after Ecuador, has been trying for years to export the fruit to Australia, which has refused to relax its import ban even when a cyclone devastated the national crop last year.

Kang said Canberra had asked the Philippines to comment on its import risk study, which listed possible quarantine measures to ensure Philippine bananas were free of pests and disease, including inspection and spraying.

In October 2002, the Philippines filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization, accusing Australia of denying its bananas market access.

That complaint has yet to be resolved.

In January, Australian Trade Minister Warren Truss said a decision on Philippine bananas "will be made on the basis of science."

Australia spent years conducting its import risk assessment in the Philippines because local banana plantations are scattered across an archipelago of over 7,000 islands, exposing the crops to a potentially diverse range of diseases.

Australian industry leaders have said five banana diseases, collectively known as the Black Plague, are endemic to the Philippines.

Kang said the Philippines and banana growers in Australia had until May 30 to comment on the draft import risk analysis.

All the comments will then be considered before a final report is produced.

Agriculture Undersecretary Segfredo Serrano said they would have to determine if the conditions being proposed by Australia were commercially viable.

"We have to assess if they are just trade barriers," he told reporters.

Last month, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said he was skeptical about Canberra allowing the entry of Philippine bananas.

"I would like to be pleasantly surprised," he said. *Reuters*

Kin press probe of PMAer's slay

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY Alumni Association and the family of slain Lt. Sadat Tamano have asked the Department of Justice to fast track the reopening of murder charges against suspects in the young officer's murder—among them the former mayor of a Lanao del Sur town.

Tamano and his aide Pfc. Nabral Bara, were ambushed in Cagayan de Oro on Dec. 11, 2005.

Double murder complaints filed earlier against former Kapai town Mayor Aminolah Mangurun and five other men were initially dismissed by the DOJ for lack of evidence. Mangurun denied the charge.

But police recommended last September the reopening of the murder case after a re-investigation allegedly uncovered new evidence against the suspects.

In a letter to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, The PMA Alumni Association, chaired by retired Brig.Gen. Roland Pattugalan asked for the fast resolution of Tamano's killing.

Pattugalan also mentioned that the suspects in the Tamano ambush-slay were stopped at a checkpoint in Saguiaran, Lanao del Sur on July 29, 2006 and the police found five firearms in their vehicle. A case of illegal possession of firearms, however, has yet to be filed against them.

"Both cases are pending in your Department for sometime already. We respectfully request for the speedy resolution of both cases," Pattugalan said in his letter.

Shalimar Tamano, the brother of the slain officer, said the speedy resolution of the case would prevent the eruption of "rido" or the ritual of vengeance in the Lanao province.

The complaint against Mangurun alleged that he had Tamano killed because he suspected the PMA graduate of having an affair with his wife Rachma, the incumbent mayor of Kapai.

Tamano's brother denied there was a love triangle. He said Mangurun's wife was a childhood friend of the Tamanos.

"We have risen above personal revenge. We want to set an example to people of Lanao del Sur not to do wrong when someone has done you wrong," Shahlimar said in a recent interview.

"We want the people of Lanao del Sur to see that the justice system in the country works," he added.

INQUIRER learned that although the police had submitted their new findings and recommendations six months ago, the DOJ prosecutor assigned to the case has yet to open the Tamano folder.

Senior State Prosecutor Theodore Villanueva said the double murder case was only recently transferred to him.

He said he would still have to review the records of the case before resolving it.

Before Villanueva, Senior State Prosecutor Leo Dacera handled the case. He initially dismissed the case but ordered the police to conduct a reinvestigation.

Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc.
(ZAMCELCO)
Putik, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Putik, this city, per requisite of Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL interested Bidders/ Suppliers to apply for pre-qualification/eligibility and to bid for the supply of STEEL POLE, ON CONSIGNMENT BASIS and VAT inclusive of the following items, to wit:

200 pcs. OCTAGONAL STEEL POLE HOT DIP GALVANIZED

Type	ONE SEGMENT
Class	35 FOOTER
AGENCY PRICE	13,275.19 / pcs
Specifications:	
Length	35 footer
Top Diameter	5 inches
Butt Diameter	9 to 10 inches
Wall Thickness	3 mm
Design/Horizontal Load	500 Kgs
Weight	150 to 160 Kgs

Note: Supplier should provide Designs drawing and Load Analysis Computation. Supplier should be a Certified/Accredited by the International Organization for standardization (ISO) 9001:2000

You may secure the Pre-qualification Requirements from the Office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Putik, this city anytime during office hours before the date of the bidding.

Submission of the Pre-qualification Requirements, shall not be later than 5:00 p.m. of March 6, 2007 and no documents appertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

All applicants will be duly notified as to the results of the pre-qualification / eligibility process. Only those who will be qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding. Those who were previously qualified to participate in this bidding are exempted from the pre-qualification requirements, hence, may participate in this bidding straightforwardly.

Bidding will be conducted at 2:00 p.m. on March 13, 2007.

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bids and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of March 13, 2007. Five percent (5%) Bidder's Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) REINERIO R. RAMOS
General Manager

(PDI – March 3 & 5, 2007)

Republika ng Pilipinas
Republic of the Philippines
Kagawaran ng Tanggulang Pambansa
Department of National Defense

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

(Supply, Delivery and Installation of Digital Aerial Mapping Camera)

The project involves the acquisition of one (1) Digital Aerial Mapping Camera and its Integrated Logistics Support (ILS) package. The plan is to acquire one Digital Aerial Mapping Camera in one time buy. This camera shall be capable of producing digital images of large target areas. Likewise it shall be fitted to the TC-690A aircraft which is the main platform in the conduct of aerial photo surveillance operation. A digital workstation shall be included in the package/system to process the images gathered and produced by the camera. Furthermore, the aerial camera must be capable of exposing in rapid succession a great number of photographs of different specifications. Since the camera must perform this function while the aircraft is moving at high speed, it must have broad range of cycling rate and efficient shutters. The guiding principles for this project shall be based on affordability and sustainability while conforming to the requirements of our Air Force in furtherance of accomplishing its mission.

1. The Department of National Defense/Armed Forces of the Philippines (DND/AFP), through the General Appropriations Act and the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund 2000, intends to apply the sum of **SIXTY TWO MILLION EIGHT HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND PESOS (PHP 62,850,000.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the ***Digital Aerial Mapping Camera Acquisition Project and its Integrated Logistics Support (ILS) package.*** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The DND/AFP now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the Digital Aerial Mapping Camera Acquisition Project. Delivery of the GOODS is required within a period of **Ninety (90) calendar days.** The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws and regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from DND Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00AM to 5:00 PM Monday to Friday excluding holidays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of **TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (PHP 25,000.00).** The method of payment will be on cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The AFP/DND will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on 9:00 A.M., March 9, 2007 at DND Conference Room, 3rd Floor, DND Bldg., Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 9:00 A.M., March 20, 2007. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in any form and corresponding amount allowed under RA 9184 and its IRR-A. Late bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on 9:00 A.M., March 20, 2007 at DND Conference Room, 3rd Floor, DND Bldg., Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. Only bids from manufacturers or their duly authorized representatives of the aforementioned system/equipment will be entertained.
10. To facilitate eligibility checking, manufacturers and/or prospective bidders who wish to participate in the public bidding may apply for registration with the DND BAC, through the DND BAC Secretariat, at least fifteen (15) days prior to the scheduled submission and opening of bids for the project pursuant to DND BAC Cir 01-2005 dtd 12 May 2005 (copy of the circular can be downloaded at the website specified below).
11. The DND/AFP reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

DND BAC Secretariat
Room 104-A, First Floor,
Left Wing, DND Building,
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo,
Quezon City, Philippines 1110
Telephone No: (632)911-6001 local 8414
Telefax No: (632)421-3531
Email: bacsecretariat@dnd.gov.ph
Website: www.afpmodernization.mil.ph

(Sgd.) ASEC ROBERTO G NUQUI
Chairman, DND BAC

(PDI – March 3, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
Region V (Bicol)
Legazpi City
DepED

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education Regional/Division Offices, through its Regional/Division Bids and Awards Committees (BAC's), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

NAME OF PROJECT	CY 2006 Supply and Delivery of School Furniture
LOCATION	DepED Regional Office and DepED Division Offices
BRIEF DESCRIPTION	Package A – Elementary Tables and Chair/ Teachers Table and Chair Package B – Elementary Tablet Armchair/Secondary Tablet Armchair/Teachers Table and Chair
ABC & FUNDING SOURCE	Funding Source is the Government of the Philippines (GOP), 2006 General Appropriations Act (GAA)
CONTRACT DURATION	One Hundred Twenty (120) Calendar Days
DELIVERY SITES	"Door to Door" delivery to various recipient schools (See schedule of Requirements of the Bidding Documents)

Name of Procuring Entity	Address	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Issuance of Bid Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Opening of Bids
DepED Regional Office V	Rawis, Legazpi City	P14,811,000.00	Starting March 1, 2007	March 15, 2007	March 27, 2007
Albay	Bicol University Compound, Legazpi City	7,370,000.00		March 15, 2007	March 27, 2007
Tabaco City	San Lorenzo, Tabaco City	4,219,000.00		March 8, 2007	March 21, 2007
Legazpi City	Old Albay District Legazpi City	881,000.00		March 8, 2007	March 20, 2007
Ligao City	Guinit, Ligao City	3,482,000.00			
Camarines Norte	Daet, Camarines Norte	5,144,000.00		March 8, 2007	March 20, 2007
Camarines Sur	San Jose, Pili, Camarines Sur	19,406,000.00		March 8, 2007	March 22, 2007
Naga City	Peñafrancia Avenue, Naga City	742,000.00		March 8, 2007	March 20, 2007
Iriga City	Iriga City	480,000.00		March 8, 2007	March 20, 2007
Catanduanes	Virac, Catanduanes	4,117,000.00		March 8, 2007	March 20, 2007
Masbate	Rodeo Road, Masbate City	12,555,000.00		March 8, 2007	March 21, 2007
Masbate City	Masbate City	2,708,000.00		March 8, 2007	March 22, 2007
Sorsogon	Sorsogon City, Sorsogon	8,334,000.00		March 12, 2007	March 23, 2007
Sorsogon City	Sorsogon NHS Compound, Sorsogon City	4,613,000.00		March 8, 2007	March 22, 2007

The venue for the scheduled procurement activities will be at the respective address of the procuring entity. Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount required by the entity concerned.

The provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations shall govern relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation.

The DepED reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) ENRIQUE A. LLEGADO
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
DepED Regional Office No. V
Legazpi City

(PDI – March 3 & 9, 2007)

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, March 3, 2007
1st Week of Lent
Katharine Drexel

1st Reading: Dt 26:16-19
Gospel: Matthew 5:43-48

Jesus said to his disciples, "You have heard that it was said: Love your neighbor and do not do good to your enemy. But this I tell you: Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in Heaven. For he makes his sun rise on both the wicked and the good, and he gives rain to both the just and the unjust.

"If you love those who love you, what is special about that? Do not even tax collectors do as much? And if you are friendly only to your friends, what is so exceptional about that? Do not even the pagans do as much? For your part you shall be righteous and perfect in the way your heavenly Father is righteous and perfect."

Commentary

We dwell in a covenant with God that we have agreed to. We then must hearken to God's voice so that we know that we belong to God—peculiarly his own—and that we don't live like other peoples/nations/countries. We must constantly review our lives together as his people, as communities, parishes, churches (national and universal) to see if we do indeed keep God's decrees and statutes (and not only those of our own configuring). This is the beginning of obedience and of knowing God.

Jesus extends all those commands—beyond one's own family/nation/religion; beyond all our limits and boundaries. The new litmus test or benchmark for faithfulness in Jesus' community is how we love our enemies and how we pray for those who persecute us. This is what Love demands. Our model of imitation is God our Father and how God is compassionate and merciful with those who are unjust as well as just. We must look to those who disagree with us, harm us, those we are afraid of, those condemned. And we must stop treating them as the rest of the world does—we must treat them as God in Jesus treats us all.

NDF leaders Luis Jalandoni (left) and Jose Maria Sison with Filipino entertainers Ara Mina and Janno Gibbs.
PHOTO FROM WWW.JOSEMARIASISON.ORG

Joma enjoying good life in exile, claims military

By Christine O. Avendaño

MILITARY OFFICIALS YESTERDAY LASHED out at communist founder Jose Ma. Sison for enjoying the good life, citing photographs posted on his official website showing him hobnobbing with sexy star Ara Mina, while his local comrades are suffering.

"Here is somebody enjoying life while the people supporting his cause remain in the mountains and are suffering, have no food to eat, and who get drenched up there when it rains," military spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro told reporters.

Bacarro was referring to the New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which had been engaged in a 39-year-old armed struggle against the government.

Sison, its founder and leader, has been in exile in the Netherlands for the past 19 years. He has been tagged as a terrorist by the United States and the European Union.

Sison seemed to be the target of the military lately. Last week, it presented a 20-year-old video showing him again spilling the beans on who's who in the Left's legal front organizations back in the late 80s.

The release of the video came at a time when government officials accused the Left of being behind several of the extrajudicial killings of journalists and activists in the country, which leftist organizations have blamed to the military.

In a briefing, Bacarro said he was "amazed" and "surprised" when he saw the photographs on Sison's website at josemariasison.org.

Being "open" to the Internet public, websites of the Left are being visited by the military to see what its enemy is up to, according to Bacarro.

He said that normally the website would feature the "literary" works of Sison.

Thus, he was surprised when he opened Sison's website, which is handled by the International Network for Philippine Studies, and saw pictures there taken during the group's Christmas party on Dec. 9 last year in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The first five pictures showed a delighted Sison in the company of Ara Mina who was in very revealing outfits as the sexy movie star sang to him and even danced with him.

Another picture showed Sison with Ara and singer Janno Gibbs at the same Christmas party.

"I don't know what his objectives are by posting those pictures but it could be ego-tripping," Bacarro said of Sison.

While he said there was nothing wrong in posting pictures on the website, what was appalling to him, and apparently distasteful, was the "message" in the pictures.

"It's the message that the picture is sending and that is Joma is enjoying (life) while the people up there are rotting like hell," he said. "I really pity them."

Bacarro also said that everyone has a social life but for Sison to post these pictures on mediums like these was insensitive.

"You just don't boast about it. You don't post it," he also said at one point.

He expressed the belief that the pictures will not sit well with the NPA rebels, who may find them to be "totally hurting."

"The bottom line is that he's enjoying life while his men are suffering. Look at the disparity."

DAR chief: I gave my word to farmers

AGRARIAN REFORM SECRETARY NASSER Pangandaman yesterday gave fresh assurance he would install the farmer-beneficiaries in their property in a sugarcane plantation in Negros Occidental next week in the face of lingering doubts aired by 22 others on hunger strike in Manila.

Pangandaman said he would fly to the province on Monday and meet with local DAR officials to arrange the installation of the 122 farmers in a 144-hectare land inside Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castellana town.

"I've already stated my position. They will be installed next week," he said in a phone interview, brushing aside the beneficiaries' fears.

Earlier in the day, the beneficiaries said their scheduled installation next week remained uncertain after Thursday afternoon's meeting with DAR Undersecretary Narciso Nieto and Secretary Rafael Coscolluela, adviser for the Visayas, yielded nothing.

Jose Gerry Cahilig, one of the 22 beneficiaries on hunger strike outside the DAR office, said they expected the meeting to tackle the details of their installation, but were surprised when Coscolluela brought up a new offer from landowner Robert Cuenca.

Cuenca had reportedly offered a new area for occupation, comprising 61 hectares inside their 144-hectare property plus another 41 hectares outside, but the farmers rejected this because the additional 41 ha wasn't covered by the certificate of land ownership award (CLOA).

"This is unacceptable. How can they give more preference to Cuenca's interest to our interests? We are the rightful owners of the land. It appears Cuenca is the new DAR Secretary," Cahilig said in an interview in their tent outside the DAR gate.

"We appeal to the President to step in and install us. If Pangandaman can't enforce the law, the President should fire him and install another one who has the political will to install us."

The beneficiaries said they had been assured by Nieto that their installation would push through, whether they accept or reject the new offer.

The beneficiaries began camping outside the DAR on Feb. 20, and went on hunger strike the next day in protest of Pangandaman's failure to install them at their landholding on Feb. 6. Since then, several of them had been rushed to the hospital after losing consciousness and becoming dizzy.

Pichay posters sprout all over; it's sabotage, says solon's camp

By Nikko Dizon and Jerome Aning

POSTERS OF ADMINISTRATION SENATOrial candidate Rep. Prospero Pichay have been plastered all over Metro Manila, drawing the ire of Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.

"*Saan ka nakakita, ang* Pichay *tumutubo sa semento*! (What a sight, Pichay growing on cement!)," Abalos said in a press briefing yesterday, making a pointed reference to the candidate's slogan, "*Itanim ang* Pichay *sa Senado*" (Plant Pichay in the Senate).

Abalos made the comment after seeing for himself Pichay's posters filling up spaces on walls and Metro Rail Transit posts in Cubao, Quezon City, and in Sta. Mesa, Manila.

Reporters also told Abalos that Pichay's posters similarly blanketed the Quiapo Bridge. A TV reporter presented the Comelec chair with a video clip she took of one of the bridge's sides showing how it was filed with the candidate's posters.

Abalos subsequently called up Senior Inspector Benito de Leon, head of the Manila Police District Station 3 that has jurisdiction over Quiapo.

"I hope we can arrest people. You can use your mobile cars. Your men will be properly rewarded and receive commendations for the arrests they make," Abalos told De Leon.

The Comelec has deputized police forces to arrest people putting up campaign materials in areas that have not been designated common poster areas.

Abalos said the Comelec was set to send a notice to Pichay directing him to remove his posters that were not in Comelec-designated common poster areas within three days or else face disqualification for violating election laws.

Pichay's campaign manager Samuel Senoren told the INQUIRER yesterday that the candidate's supporters had been given "explicit and clear instructions" to follow the rules on postering.

"We condemn the attempt by some persons to sabotage the campaign of Rep. Pichay by placing his posters in non-designated areas," Senoren said.

"We are abiding by and will continue to abide by the rules of the Comelec on postering," he added. "Just the same, we have created a brigade to remove these posters in non-designated areas."

Abalos had previously warned reelectionist candidates Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan and Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, and administration candidate, Mike Defensor, among others, about their illegal posting of campaign material.

"We at the Comelec would like to think that the candidates are not behind this. But our faith in them will erode if they don't immediately take steps to remove the posters," Abalos said.

Abalos reminded candidates that the Comelec on Thursday recommended the filing of criminal charges against Manila Rep. Rudy Bacani and losing congressional candidate Manuel Bagatsing for premature campaigning during the elections in May, 2004 for their failure to remove their holiday posters and billboards within the period given by the poll body.

The Comelec has also deputized the Department of Public Works and Highways to remove all illegal posters and illegally-posted campaign materials throughout the country.

Comelec Resolution No. 7830, approved on Feb. 28, expanded the coverage of an earlier order that authorized the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority to remove all illegal campaign materials in the National Capital Region.

25 million made
25 million car

Be part of the biggest cellular network in the countr

25,000,000 STRONG.

*25 million subscriptions includes Talk 'N Text.

the right choice*.
not be wrong.

with the widest coverage and the most innovations.

25,000,000 SMART

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2007

ISSN 0116-2642

Vol. 22 No. 85

Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/opinion

OPINION

Text us your feedback: inquirer opi name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•Subscription Hotline 896-6000

The duel

EDITORIALS

AFTER PRESIDENTIAL CHIEF OF STAFF JOEY SALceda challenged the opposition to a duel (of ideas), the administration hesitated and tried to hedge. Obviously, the government wanted to buy time—it wasn't sure of the repercussions of the global stock market plunge and its side effects on the value of the peso, both of which are cornerstones of the Palace's claim to economic progress.

Then yesterday, after the global markets (and the local bourse) rallied and the peso dipped just slightly—and more importantly, after the opposition proved impotent in converting real-world events into additional propaganda of its own—the Palace announced that, yes, a debate between the senatorial aspirants of Team Unity and the Genuine Opposition should take place. At a time and place yet to be determined, and under rules that have yet to be mutually agreed upon. That's playing for time—the opposition's response has been pretty clear: a debate in Plaza Miranda.

If both administration and opposition aren't bluffing, they should immediately set up a joint committee and come to an agreement on the location and the rules for the debate. If broadcasting the event from the relative comfort of a TV studio is preferable, it's easy enough to just dust off the rules followed in the debates among the presidential candidates, which the Management Association of the Philippines helped put together in 1998. The need for a knowledgeable arbiter is vital: it's good that both sides want to debate on the economy. But as Solita Monsod had pointed out, both sides shouldn't be allowed to get away with producing inaccurate information and claim they're facts.

We support a debate held in the earliest possible time, because the local races are due to start. Once local races kick off, the public, and the politicians, will be distracted by the provincial contests.

As it is, the Palace—where lies heaviest the responsibility to be prudent with public spending and with the use of built-in administration advantages—has been disingenuous when it comes to practicing what it preaches.

In a Palace press briefing, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita shrugged off the handing out of Team Unity's campaign platform to reporters, even though it contradicted the President's statement that she intended to concentrate on governance during the campaign period. Local officials have said they would bankroll Team Unity's provincial sorties—but with what funds? And at what cost to governance?

Reports have shown government spending on advertisements has been steadily climbing—by 50 percent since the third quarter of last year up to the present, Nielsen Media Research Philippines says, pointing out that most of the spending is being done by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office. During election campaign periods, government ads may be thinly disguised forms of electioneering, and as with so many things, the government may be violating the spirit of the law with impunity.

So let's see if a debate will take place—and if so, if it will end up being so restrictive in its rules that an effective debate becomes impossible. Let both sides—and the independents—be brought together in a public forum, with the widest possible publicity, so that this election won't be determined merely by big money and the logistics it buys.

And the sideshow

THE DANGER IS THAT THE ATTENTION ON THE Senate race has blinded the public to some disturbing signs concerning how local races, specifically for the House of Representatives, may be going.

The Comelec has floated a sinister trial balloon. It says it's thinking of granting the President's pet party the "dominant minority party" status. "Dominant minority party" is commonly understood to mean the leading **opposition** party. Such recognition by the Comelec allows a party to field election watchers entitled to copies of the election returns. And everyone knows these certificates become the center of any dispute over the conduct of elections.

In the past, such a suggestion would have been readily seen as downright ridiculous and contrary to reason and common sense, not to mention fair play. But it's now being considered by the Comelec—and obviously being floated to see how the public will react. If this happens, the consequences will be grave. It will place the 2007 elections in doubt—as if the country needs yet another reason to further undermine the credibility, and legitimacy, of the electoral process.

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Excessive TV commercials

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

PAUL R. MORTEL IS A REGULAR CORRESpondent of mine who has an unflagging interest in various civic matters requiring public attention. He wrote me recently complaining against the excessive commercials in our local television stations, citing facts and figures I would like to share with you. Following is his letter in full:

"For the sake of the harassed/beleaguered televiewers, I think it is about time that the government intervened in order to put a stop to the too-much overloading of commercials in top-rating programs on TV today. Gone are the days when watching TV was a pleasant experience because at that time the TV networks were strictly following the KBP policy of airing 18 60-sec spots (equivalent to 36 30-sec spots for one-hour programs). During those times, because of strict compliance, programs started on time and ended on time.

"Today, because of too-much overloading of commercials, program plugs on TV have changed to 'Please watch Y program *pagkatapos* ng X program.' Please note that the program content of a one-hour show is only 42 minutes in order to accomplish the 18 60-sec spots prescribed load. If one will closely monitor, he or she will find out that the number of commercials being aired per commercial gap (there are six gaps per one-hour program) range from 12 to 14 30-sec spots or a total of 78 to 84 30-sec commercial spots for a one-hour program.

"To compound the problem, this number does not yet include program plugs that surely add to the clutter. About 2 years ago, there was this TV special, the 'Andrea Bocelli Concert,' which was heavily plugged for airing at 9:30 p.m. You know what? It was finally telecast at 10:25 p.m., a delay of 55 minutes equivalent to 110 30-sec spots. Of course, we all know the cause of such delay, too much overloading of commercials in the preceding programs. No wonder these TV networks sign off at close to 2 a.m. of the following day.

"I am just wondering whatever happened to broadcast media's vow of 'self-regulation' as a condition to the President's non-interference in their day-to-day operations. I want to make it clear that I am not against commercials per se because, being a former advertising man, I know fully well that they are the life-blood of the TV industry. As I said earlier, what I am against is the too-much overloading of commercials, much to the detriment of viewers who suffer in silence because they don't know where to go to lodge their complaints.

"I believe that the 6 30-sec spot per commercial gap is just about the ideal number of commercials that can be tolerated by our viewers. Here's a bit of history: we inherited this practice of airing the ideal number of commercials from the USA because during the 1960s when Philippine TV was still in its infancy, almost 100 percent of our TV programs were imported from the USA. Remember 'Bonanza,' 'Gunsmoke,' 'I Love Lucy,' the 'Dick Van Dyke Show,' etc.?

"I think everybody in the broadcast industry knows that the airlanes belong to the State, hence it has the power to rescind licenses or franchises granted to broadcast media if there are abuses being committed by them. Since televiewers are consumers too, perhaps the Department of Trade and Industry (or is it the NTC?) can come into the picture in order to protect the interests of viewers who have suffered long enough."

I am not one of those harassed viewers because I have long ceased to watch local television programs except certain shows like championship boxing bouts and the Academy Awards. Cable programs are generally more entertaining or informative and are not encumbered with too many commercials that, anyway, are on the whole less unwelcome than most of our local advertisements.

Local TV commercials are hardly bearable save for a few outstanding ones like the thousands of rolling oranges plugging for a soft drink and the late Rod Navarro announcing the merits of an airline on top of one of its airplanes and later asking, "How do I get down?" And, of course, our female models are exceptionally beautiful compared to their artificial airbrushed rivals from the New York and Paris salons.

The excessive commercials on local TV are bad enough, but the programs themselves are no better if not even worse. They were more acceptable when the local stations imported shows like those mentioned by Mortel, miniseries like "Poor Man, Rich Man," detective stories like "Hill Street Blues," and comedies like "Three's Company." These programs have been replaced with telenovelas from Taiwan and basketball games played by tall strangers who have suddenly discovered their Filipino ancestors.

The executives of the local TV companies should realize that their industry is not only a vast wasteland for the accumulation of profits but a responsible agency for educating the people and elevating their standards. TV shows are not carnival attractions for momentary pleasure but an excellent medium for wholesome presentations that can refine the sensitivities of their audience and improve their taste and demeanor. Television can be an effective instrument not for the cheapening of the nation's culture but for its enrichment.

So much for agrarian reform

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

WHAT HAS CAUSED THE JEKYLL-HYDE transformation of Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman? Until late last year, he was very supportive of farmers in battle for their rights under the agrarian reform law—including those from the Bondoc Peninsula as well as those involved in the now infamous Hacienda Velez-Malaga case. Last September, after it became clear that there were no longer any legal impediments to the installation of the 122 farmer-beneficiaries in the latter case, Pangandaman ordered his regional director to install them within 45 days. And he was very concerned when the scheduled installation in October and November did not push through because—please note—the local police did not provide security assistance. That was his Dr. Jekyll persona.

In early December, the Mr. Hyde in Pangandaman made his appearance. He cancelled the scheduled Dec. 7 installation of the farmers, at the last minute. Why? Because, he said, Roberto J. Cuenca, the former owner of the 446-hectare hacienda, was offering another piece of his real property in lieu of the 144 hectares that had been awarded to the farmer-beneficiaries through a Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA).

Which brings up an interesting question: How could Cuenca still offer compromises on land he no longer owned? The records show that the entire hacienda had been placed under CARP coverage, that two collective CLOAs had been issued—one for 144 hectares to 122 beneficiaries, and one for the 300-odd hectares to farm workers who supposedly organized themselves into a cooperative. That the cooperative is under Cuenca's control does not change the fact that he no longer owns the land.

But back to the Jekyll-Hyde story. The 122 farmer-beneficiaries refused the "offer" on the grounds that (1) Cuenca was no longer the land's owner, (2) it would mean still another delay and (3) the land being offered was of inferior quality.

Over a month later, the farmers got hold of a copy of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) purportedly between Cuenca and Pangandaman, providing for the cancellation of the CLOA of the 122 beneficiaries, the issuance of new CLOAs for them and the farm workers under the control of Cuenca, and the eviction of the beneficiaries from the 10 hectares that they currently occupy. The MOU already had the signature of Cuenca, but not of Pangandaman—who has denied that he was a party to any MOU.

Nevertheless, the farmer-beneficiaries, outraged at what they considered a "sellout" by Pangandaman, decided to install themselves in their land, with or without police protection. So last Jan. 24, they occupied another five hectares of their 144-hectare property.

Former owner Cuenca apparently did not take kindly to this. Undaunted by the fact that he had lost his 10-year legal battle to keep his land, he is said to have fell back on plans B and C, which unfortunately seem to involve physical intimidation in one and political power plays in the other. On Jan. 24, armed men arrived at the five-hectare property and started a rampage of shooting (all captured on video, by the way) which wounded two of the beneficiaries (ARBs, for short). And after midnight, armed men came back and shot dead ARB Pepito Santillan. (It must also be noted that the local police did not conduct an investigation of the killing and, despite affidavits of eyewitnesses as to the murderer, the named suspect, a Cuenca follower, has not been arrested.)

The resulting publicity seemed to have galvanized the government. A meeting was called on Feb. 1 by the Department of Agrarian Reform with the Philippine National Police, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Department of Interior and Local Government and DAR-Negros Occidental officials. Pangandaman was absent, although his undersecretaries were there. In the meeting, DAR committed to install the ARBs on Feb. 6. You guessed it: the installation did not push through.

What are the reasons that Pangandaman has given at one time or another? One was that the ARBs could not be installed because there is a threat of violence. Following this logic, there is therefore no hope for the ARBs to be installed, because the violence is always going to be threatened by Cuenca's camp. The latest one (reported by this newspaper on Feb. 28) is that there is a Cuenca claim that "still has to be threshed out." And what is that? That some of the 122 ARBs are not legitimate farmers. Here, Pangandaman not only shows his Hyde personality, but also his ignorance of what is happening in his department—DAR-Region 6 has dismissed that claim in an order dated Feb. 12!

What caused the transformation of Pangandaman from Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde? The swing from pro-farmer to pro-(former) landlord? Only his hairdresser will know for sure; but the good old grapevine has it that it was caused by a call or calls from the congressman representing the district where Hacienda Velez-Malaga lies. And who is this all-powerful congressman? That would be Iggy Arroyo. The gentleman has denied it.

Meanwhile, in sheer desperation at the inability of the combined forces of government to enforce the rule of law and the decision of the courts, as well as at the government's seeming helplessness against one former landowner, 22 of the farmer-beneficiaries, including eight women, have shaved their heads and gone on a hunger strike.

Today will be their 10th day. Already, most of them have collapsed, but they refuse to be hospitalized. What does Pangandaman have to say about this? That he will install them "next week."

So much for social justice.

Seniors now allowed to buy drugs with card

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

MANY PEOPLE WONDER IF REP. ROLEX SUPLICO of Iloilo is still with the opposition. He was quoted as saying that security was not the reason the Genuine Opposition's Iloilo rally was canceled; it was the low turnout, only 100 people showed up at the rally site. Suplico, a nephew of LP Gov. Neil Tupas, is said to be preparing to challenge his uncle this May, and might have exaggerated things. But the inescapable fact seems to be that GO is in huge disarray, necessitating Sen. Serge Osmeña to assume management of its flagging campaign. By contrast, warm crowds are said to have met Team Unity even in the traditional opposition bailiwick of Laguna. It seems that the lack of issues, other than to oust and attack Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, and the lack of funds and a grass-roots machinery to carry its candidates are hurting GO's campaign. The talk is, former President Joseph Estrada refuses to release more funds, so it's every candidate for himself, meaning, most of them will have a hard time, except for Manuel Villar, John Osmeña and Loren Legarda.

By the way, the big TV-radio networks are reportedly charging an arm and a leg: P25 million for a package-deal exposure in both media. On the other hand, the big radio networks are said to be charging from P6.5 million to P8 million for regular exposure and plugs.

* * *

Vice President Noli de Castro acted fast on the complaints of senior citizens unable to buy discounted medicines with their credit cards. They reported that drug outlets, notably the giant Mercury Drug, insist on cash payments only. De Castro not only wrote Vivian Que, Mercury Drug's president, to remind her that the provision in the Expanded Senior Citizen's Act he authored in the Senate does not discriminate between cash and credit payments. He followed it up with a meeting at Malacañang earlier this week. It was attended by Que and her officials, Secretaries Eduardo Ermita, Peter Favila and Margarito Teves, and the Vice President's chief of staff, lawyer Jessie Andres. Ermita said at the outset that he and some relatives have also had encountered the same problem.

* * *

The Mercury Drug officials argued that they make only a 12 percent margin of profit while the law allows a 20-percent discount on purchases. In addition, credit card payments are delayed by as much as a month. But De Castro was able to elicit admission that the senior citizens' purchases account for only 15 percent of the company's total sales. The Mercury Drug officials also complained that the senior citizens' privilege is sometimes abused, citing one who purchased P1 million worth of discounted medicines, and that they have been unable to get tax credits from the BIR for their discounted sales. This prompted the Veep to set another meeting with them and BIR Commissioner Jose Buñag. Ultimately, he said, the bottom line is there is a law to be followed about the seniors' use of credit cards as payment. Then, with a big smile, he said that it's obvious that despite the Mercury Drug officials' complaints, the giant drug chain keeps putting up one outlet after another across the nation. The Veep must have won over Que, for she promised to issue a memo to all branches to accept credit card payments from seniors, effective last March 1. Orchids to the Veep and Que for responding to the seniors' appeal.

* * *

On the invitation of my friends, civic leaders Ana Dayrit-Hipolito and Finina Ocampo Galang of Angeles City, a group of us joined Speaker Jose de Venecia in a talk before the Holy Angel University in that city some weeks back. The close to a hundred people, led by Holy Angel's chair, engineer Peter Nepomuceno (a descendant of its eminent co-founder, Dr. Juan Nepomuceno), its new president, Dr. Arlyn Sicangco-Villanueva, various department heads and a sampling of the 15,000 student population gathered in its wood-paneled, book-lined Juan D. Nepomuceno Center for Kapampangan Studies. The ambiance, which JDV said reminded him of some universities abroad, must have inspired him, for he spoke animatedly about the merits of Charter change, a cause he has been advocating for over 15 years now, and the infrastructure projects in Central Luzon fully supported by Congress, such as the Clark-Subic highway, that will bring huge progress to this region.

JDV has few equals in extemporaneous discourse and I've heard diplomats admit that he's a tough act to follow in after-dinner speeches. But it seems he's most effective in intimate audiences, as three-termer Rep. Francis Nepomuceno, who'll be running for mayor of Angeles, noted. JDV won a number of converts to his Cha-cha advocacy despite a certain bias against it—and him—at the start. Afterwards the Manila visitors were treated to a typical Kapampangan lunch prepared by Marsha Santos-Nepomuceno, wife of Gerry Nepomuceno, the president and general manager of Angeles Electric & Power Co.

* * *

I must confess to not being very acquainted with Angeles City, so that the intellectual ferment in its biggest university was a pleasant surprise to me and, doubtless, to the other Manila visitors. What impressed me most was the total dedication of Holy Angel's Center for Kapampangan Studies, under Director Robbie Tantingco, to the promotion of Pampango history and culture. They gifted us with copies of its regular publication, called "Singsing," which turned out to be such a wealth of historical, cultural and social information about Pampanga! It contained very interesting articles about its distinguished citizens—"Rebels, Visionaries, Trailblazers, Mavericks, Heroes, Saints"—who altered the landscape of Kapampangan culture, its cuisine, language and literature and many other items of interest. A slogan in Sining runs thus: "Become a better Filipino by being a good Kapampangan." Obviously the Pampangos are mighty proud of their history and culture, and we can only wish that other regions would be as dedicated and assiduous in propagating theirs.

In hell there is no music

COMMENTARY

Denis Murphy

SOME OF US SPENT ASH WEDNESDAY AFTERnoon at the People Power Monument with Fr. Robert Reyes and members of the Kubol Pag-asa group. We were there to pray and fast in order that all people might have, in the words of the group's statement, "water and bread, justice and truth, peace and freedom."

These are lofty goals and they never seemed so far away than in the first three hours of the afternoon. The scorching 1 p.m. sun beat down on us. Some of the women worried what it would do to their skin; others talked of what they would do as soon as our stay at the monument was over. A movie at Robinson's, perhaps? We sat in silent prayer—broken only by the sound of a bell every 10 minutes, and the occasional flute music of Dom-an, a young mother from Sagada whose husband was assassinated in an Ilocos tobacco field in November 2005.

Dark clouds covered the sun and it was cool for a while, then the red-hot sun reappeared. The traffic on Edsa was the only thing to watch. The drone never stopped as cars and buses raced in a mad rush up the hill alongside Camp Aguinaldo—buses in the middle of the road, everything else but the buses in the bus lane—till they disappeared over the top of a hill. Clouds of exhaust fumes rolled over us. Lost somewhere in the traffic was an ambulance with its siren calling for cooperation. No one moved aside. Life could always be worse, I thought: I could be in that ambulance. How many patients survive the ride and the siren?

Traffic is a dreary sight and encourages dreary thoughts about the country.

Just 21 years ago, the same stretch of road was packed with people demanding an end to abusive power. Just 30 meters from where we sat at the monument, the people stopped the tanks. It's hard to believe it wasn't all a fairy tale and that ordinary men and women could believe so strongly in their cause that they put their bodies in front of tanks and compelled them to stop.

The weariness and brutality of today are much more accessible in the tragic lives of our poor. In Dumpsite, North Harbor, I met a young man of 10, named Christian. He was black as an Ati-atihan dancer, but not from makeup; rather from the filth he worked in all day, on the new garbage mountain, and from his home area in Ulingan (where the smoke blackens even the babies). Christian doesn't go to school. He earned P80 the day I met him. He'll earn that in the next 30 or 40 years, till he's too old to do more scavenging.

Not far, from the monument, 100-plus families living under two neighboring *estero* bridges will be evicted. Their homes look like storm debris piled up against the bridges. Inside, under the bridge, it is always night and very hard to breathe. The people barely survive day to day, yet children are born and go to school, people love one another. While some finish college, most drop out and work hand-to-mouth jobs all their lives. They have a tight-knit community where people help each other when there are troubles. But now the Metro Manila Development Authority and the Department of Public Works and Highways are evicting them.

There are 4 million to 5 million people living in similar bad conditions, plagued by disease, bone-deep alienation and the fear of eviction.

The people's only hope is to come together and, as any group in a democracy, protest what is happening to them before the mayor, government agencies, the media and the Church. Now it seems even that freedom will be constrained. The government is prepared to do something even President Ferdinand Marcos didn't do at the height of martial law—that is, station soldiers in urban poor areas. Will soldiers distinguish between the protests of ordinary people like those living under the bridge and those of more militant groups? Should they even be in a position to distinguish?

Maybe it was the heat at the monument or the long silence that caused the dreary thoughts. Dom-an has a song that goes: "In hell there is no music, an agonizing night that never ends, songless as a shattered violin." That's more or less the way it felt.

At 3 p.m., however, our silence ended. We sang hymns, then formed a large circle—there were close to a hundred people by now—and sang the "Ama Namin" just as people had at Edsa I and at the big rallies during the snap election campaign of 1986. That was better: we had our spirit back.

Then Dom-an played and sang some of the haunting melodies of the Cordillera. She is a slight woman whose long hair reaches down to her lower back. Her music reminded some of old Irish airs. The songs are sad, yet beautiful. They seem to say, music will outlast the evil, no matter how bad it is.

As a young seminarian, the late Jesuit historian Fr. Horacio dela Costa wrote an essay, claiming that at the heart of Philippine culture lay the people's faith and music, and these made the people unconquerable. I always thought it was an adolescent and romantic thought, but there at the monument as we listened to Dom-an and sang the "Our Father," I thought I understood what Father Dela Costa meant.

As she was singing I looked up to the very top of the monument where there is the statue of a woman cast in bronze representing Mother Philippines or the liberated Philippines. The woman up there is dressed, just as Dom-an is, in *saya* and simple blouse and with the same long hair. The statue has her arms raised against the dark clouds. She has snapped the chains of bondage.

Denis Murphy works with the Urban Poor Associates. His e-mail address is upa@pldtdsl.net.

Trust negotiations, not Iran

WORLD VIEW

Michel Rocard

NORTH KOREA'S AGREEMENT TO GIVE UP ITS military nuclear program was a huge success for the international community. Admittedly, the country's dire economic condition and its urgent need for energy made the agreement venal in a way. But North Korea's decision nonetheless demonstrated the virtues and efficacy of diplomacy, which brings us once again to the case of Iran.

French President Jacques Chirac recently implied that we should not overestimate the seriousness of Iran's possessing nuclear weapons. I disagree. It is true that possessing does not mean using; that for 15 years the world has had eight nuclear powers; and that nuclear force has not been used since 1945. But it is also true that Iran's emergence as the ninth nuclear power can provoke a regional and global upheaval, dangerously aggravate fears and suspicions, and confront the international community with a profound crisis of vision and policy.

So, what can we do? First, resorting to force is simply not realistic. A nuclear strike can have incalculable consequences, and the Muslim world will in this case stand together. Nor is a conventional attack possible, as Israel has no common border with Iran and most of the American army is tied down in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Exploring diplomatic avenues is therefore absolutely necessary. Success can be guaranteed if the international community, especially the United States, clearly understands and admits its necessity, and supports it firmly and completely. For example, economic sanctions, to which Iran is very sensitive, could be tightened, with a commitment not to resort to military force facilitating Russian and Chinese approval.

The only possible framework for negotiations is the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), concluded in 1968. Iran was one of the first countries to sign the document, and it cooperated with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for more than 30 years—a relationship that deteriorated only in the last three years. But the current climate of mutual wariness between Iran and the self-proclaimed triad of Germany, United Kingdom and France (with sporadic US support) is not propitious to effective negotiations.

The West's aim, announced by the United States and seconded by the triad, is to force Iran to give up uranium enrichment. Yet the NPT is clear: any signatory country that gives up nuclear weapons and accepts the IAEA's absolute and unconditional control is entitled to produce electric energy from civil nuclear sources, and to receive from the international community, if necessary, technical and financial support. Iran's oil resources are not infinite, and it wants to have complete control over the civil nuclear field—a basic right of an NPT signatory.

I cannot see how a negotiation aimed at getting Iran to renounce unilaterally a right recognized for all NPT signatories—simply in order to build confidence in the West—could be successful. Uranium enrichment is certainly the first condition for making bombs, but the level of enrichment must reach about 95 percent, compared to 3.5 percent for energy production.

Are the international scientific community and the IAEA really incapable of providing indicators and criteria that would allow the international community to differentiate between two types of industrial operations? For example, 40 years ago, when fear of nuclear proliferation was new, my teacher and friend Vassili Leontief, who invented the macroeconomic table of inter-industrial flows, argued that the best indicator of an illegal arms program is massive electricity consumption.

The Iranian government has never publicly expressed a will to possess nuclear weapons. In fact, it has offered several times to accept IAEA monitoring and has suggested that its civil nuclear program would be carried out with international cooperation. So far, the West has rejected everything, on the pretext that any uranium enrichment would indicate a military program. Although this stance is technically wrong, it is strategically rational, given the West's wariness regarding Iran's true intentions.

I recently met in Paris with Iran's ambassador to France, and I began brusquely: "So, you really want this bomb, ambassador?" His answer deserves consideration. "Of course not," he replied. "You know very well that the actual ambition of my country is to achieve regional leadership. If we had the bomb, the relationships with all our neighbors would immediately deteriorate."

As everybody knows, ambassadors are paid to lie. The West's wariness is well-founded, and we have no reason to renounce our mistrust. But that should not prevent us from exploring all scenarios. If we interpret the NPT correctly, we can launch negotiations with Iran that will quickly reveal the sincerity of its official stance.

Project Syndicate

Michel Rocard, former prime minister of France and leader of the Socialist Party, is a member of the European Parliament.

Job-hopper

YOUNG BLOOD

Raymond Calbay

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

RIGHT AFTER MY FRIEND JANICE QUIT HER MOST recent call-center job, she went straight to a fast-food restaurant, ordered a hot fudge sundae and sat smugly at a corner table. Never did ice cream taste as sweet, she swears.

About half an hour earlier, she had reported late for work and seen her manager, and she casually handed over her resignation letter, effective immediately. Forget about the contract and training bond. She had done it before and she knew threats of having to make reparations were but corporate baloney. She got another order of vanilla ice cream, relieved and happy to have won liberation from another call center's human resources department.

Finding herself free on traffic-gridlocked Buendia Avenue, she remembered one thing: she needed to update her curriculum vitae, and that would require playing down her job-hopping habit. At the moment, her tenure record (with gaps of joblessness in between) looks something like this: longest stay on a job, 11 months; shortest, one day. After completing her graduate studies in urban and regional planning, she has signed up for seven jobs, none of which had anything to do with her specialization. I keep telling tell her that her employment record is not especially remarkable since she is fast approaching 30 but has held only one regular job and in city hall at that.

In the latest entry on her employment record, a couple of colleagues had beaten her in giving notice of their departure. Between closely timed breaks, they had mumbled random complaints to each other about their work: the boredom and the drudgery, the pig-headedness of their boss, the ungodly hours, their exhaustion at the end of their shift. One guy from across her work station deliberately slept on the job so he would be axed. Another one just didn't bother to show up after getting his first paycheck. When Janice was reprimanded for the shoe stain in her swivel chair, she knew that her final ride down the elevator was coming in a matter of days.

In our circle of friends, the idea of staying for long in a seemingly dead-end type of job is scoffed at as an act of desperation. Our frequent walkouts from business process outsourcing positions must have helped raise the industry attrition rate, which currently stands at 19 percent. Most people frown and scratch their heads when confronted with these figures, especially if they are aware that more than 10 percent of the working population are jobless. But in a recent study, the human resources consulting firm, Integral Talent Systems, confirmed the trend: "Today, more employees—especially those under 30—view themselves as free agents who must actively manage their own careers. And so they don't feel a drop of guilt about jumping ship if another job offers better pay or more growth opportunity."

Job-seekers like us know the industry's open secret: help wanted ads for contact agents are churned out without fail in broadsheets and online websites. It seems that call-center jobs (take your pick: customer service, technical support, telemarketing, collection) are filled and vacated on a daily basis. There's just nothing for us to lose.

Janice was most happy about not having to wear anymore the business attire they were required to don when reporting for duty. She found the policy completely absurd because the company's clients—deaf Americans who need paid hands to place and transcribe calls for them—don't even know that they are dealing with brown-faced Filipinos forcing themselves to speak with a twang from a different time zone.

Although she has held three other call-center jobs before, Janice had different reasons for leaving. The work load was too much in her first call center, the management was stir-crazy in the second, the rest day was inconvenient in the third. Curiously, what she says would make her stay in a job are abstract concepts: a great work environment, a decent salary and generous benefits, work that is related to her field of expertise, new things to be learned on the job.

The common denominator in her many resignation experiences is the relief she felt after she unplugged her headset and shut down her PC for good. No need to collect things from her desk. What she kept in her drawers were perishables, like an empty mineral water bottle, a sachet of toothpaste.

If there's anything she got by quitting, aside from confusing her records at the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Social Security System, it was the simple realization that, as she put it, "I finally had time to rest."

Surprisingly, Janice looks forward to a Sunday of scanning the thick classifieds section for vacancies. She has even asked me to go over the pages also so that she won't miss a bright job opportunity. It's better to go around applying for a job than being stuck at home, she says, although she really likes taking care of her dogs. Come to think of it, she doesn't mind at all that her career seems to be going to the dogs for as long as she has lots of time to spend before the TV set, huddled with her pets.

Raymond Calbay, 23, is an MA Communication student at the University of Santo Tomas. He holds a regular job as an information developer.

IN THE NEWS

Lauro Baja Jr.

A toast to a true winner

THE INQUIRER FEATURE, "Goalie loses leg, still comes out winner" (INQUIRER, 2/21/07) was a most heartening story, a source of inspiration for all persons, not only those with disabilities. I am sure that like me, a lot of people were touched by the story of one-legged Joseph del Gallego who managed to remain a goalie in a game known more for its rough physicality. Del Gallego is, indeed, a winner in the true sense of the word.

His story validates our enduring concern for persons who are otherwise special in more ways than one, except that they have disabilities. And it was precisely in acknowledgment of these persons' capabilities that we urged the Sangguniang Panlalawigan ng Albay to create a Committee on Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). These people still have much to contribute toward society; they need not be pitied or end up as beggars. They have as much to contribute as the next ordinary person in the efforts toward growth and development.

In recognition of the indomitable spirit of Del Gallego, I humbly recommend that he be made an ambassador of goodwill for persons with disabilities.

Let us give Joseph del Gallego a resounding "*Mabuhay*!"

—JESUS "JAMES" B. CALISIN,
presiding officer,
Sangguniang Panlalawigan ng Albay

Montano had no say in 'Lakas Sambayanan' telecast

I'M WRITING AS THE EXECUTIVE producer of "Lakas Sambayanan," a video documentary on the history of people power in the Philippines. This video was produced and directed by Butch Nolasco, an award-winning documentarist. The script was written by another award-winner, Jose "Pete" Lacaba. Cesar Montano narrated this video on screen, and I understand it is now the subject of a Comelec inquiry.

For the record, ABS-CBN initially telecast "Lakas Sambayanan" in February 2002 as part of that network's Edsa I commemoration. It was telecast by other networks either in full or in part every Edsa I anniversary after that. Last year, Emily Abrera of Living Asia Cable Channel telecast it to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Edsa I. This year she used it again in Living Asia.

Montano was never involved at all in each time that "Lakas Sambayanan" was telecast since 2003.

May I also mention that when we engaged Montano's services for "Lakas Sambayanan," he surprised all of us when he waived his talent fee. He gave his services for free, because he simply wanted to help us remember the time when we were all heroes.

—EGGIE APOSTOL,
board chair,
Foundation for Worldwide People Power,
Philippine Stock Exchange Center,
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

NFA's highly dubious assurance on sale of GMO rice

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE letter titled "NFA monitoring sale of GE rice in RP supermarkets" from Rex C. Estoperez of the National Food Authority. (INQUIRER, 2/21/07)

We find the NFA's assurance that it will "continue to monitor and ensure that GM rice will be pulled out of the market" highly dubious, considering the agency's glaring lack of action on the issue. Estoperez proudly states that the distributor, Purefeeds, has pulled out Uncle Sam Texas Long Grain rice from supermarkets. But the NFA itself did nothing to bring about this development.

In fact, from November 2006 to early February this year, the NFA's inaction allowed supermarkets to continue selling the questionable product to unsuspecting consumers. If Purefeeds had not pulled out its stocks, the GMO rice would still be in the market, despite the NFA's full knowledge that the rice had tested positive for unapproved and illegal genetically modified organisms (GMO).

We would also like to refute Estoperez's questionable suggestion that Bayer's GMO rice is safe following the variety's deregulation in the United States. The deregulation of Bayer's GMO rice is not a guarantee that it is safe for human health and the environment. Existing WHO (World Health Organization) and FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) food standards to protect health and consumers consider current US risk assessments for GMOs inadequate and not in line with internationally accepted norms. Bayer's GMO rice, as well as another genetically modified herbicide resistant rice, Bayer LL62, which is awaiting approval from the Bureau of Plant Industry, is allowed only in the United States but nowhere else in the world.

Unless the NFA pro-actively disapproves the sale of GMO-contaminated rice in the country, and denies the application of Bayer for the introduction of another of its controversial GMO rice varieties (LL62), the Philippines may well be on its way to becoming the dumping ground of GMOs rejected by the rest of the world.

Greenpeace maintains that genetic engineering is an unnecessary and unwanted technology; it contaminates the environment, threatens biodiversity and poses unacceptable risks to health. Rice is the most important staple food of the country. To allow its unnecessary genetic tampering and contamination, especially by greedy multinational interests, is a betrayal not only of the public trust, but also of our own heritage as a rice-eating nation.

The need for genuine food security demands that the NFA and the Department of Agriculture prevent the introduction of GMO rice in the country's food chain now or in the future.

—DANIEL OCAMPO,
genetic engineering campaigner,
Greenpeace Southeast Asia,
www.greenpeacesoutheastasia.org

LETTERS

Palace's plot vs party lists

UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON human rights Philip Alston, turned out to be like the innocent child who saw the truth that the emperor was wearing no clothes, while all the sycophants were applauding the naked royalty. His observation that the military is in denial of the extrajudicial killings convincingly attributed to it is true, and his recommendations that a serious investigation be conducted and that the Melo Commission's report be made public were in order.

Alston said that "the executive branch, openly and enthusiastically aided by the military, had been trying to impede the work of the party-list groups and to put in question their right to operate freely." Such a statement confirms our belief that there is a Palace-sponsored plot to defeat militant party-list groups in the coming elections.

The Malacañang plot against militant party-list organizations includes the killing and harassment of their leaders and activists and the swamping of the party-list system with fake organizations. Even an outsider like Alston is intelligent enough to discern the not-so-secret Palace plot.

We thus call on the Commission on Elections to purge the party-list system of fake groups that are either Malacañang-supported or *trapo*-initiated. As of Feb. 13, 37 new organizations have been added to the 44 old party-list groups that have been accredited by the Comelec. These bogus groups are out to sabotage the party-list system, which was established to represent in Congress the marginalized sectors of our society.

Alston's report will help in exposing the unabated killings of trade union leaders and the appalling situation of labor rights in the country. Since the assassination of Ka Popoy Lagman, just after Edsa II in 2001, at least three union presidents affiliated with Partido ng Manggagawa have been killed. All of these cases remain unsolved.

—REP. RENATO MAGTUBO,
Partido ng Manggagawa,
5 Matiyaga St.,
Barangay Central, Quezon City

Vandal candidates defacing nature

BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE, I would like to congratulate Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos for his aggressive move against campaign materials posted outside designated areas. It's a quixotic undertaking, if I may say so, but one that must be done.

While at it, Abalos might as well be informed of the great injustice that is being done by some candidates to our natural and cultural heritage, particularly the roads leading up to Baguio City. During my recent visit to Baguio, I noticed that election graffiti was all over the place, particularly along Kennon Road and Marcos Highway.

I could see the name of the ANC party painted on almost every rock along the road, and even on rocks by the river, visible from the road. So were the names of Michael Defensor, John Osmeña and Koko Pimentel. Painting these rocks with their names makes these candidates no different from vandals who deface our surroundings. Defensor even has his non-biodegradable paraphernalia nailed to trees!

It is my fervent hope that the Comelec will act on this immediately and will issue an ultimatum directing these candidates and parties to remove the graffiti and illegal paraphernalia on these mountain roads before other candidates follow suit. Let's spare Kennon and other mountain roads from election trash.

—IVAN ANTHONY S. HENARES,
ivanhenares@gmail.com

A vision awaiting fulfillment

AFTER DECADES OF STUNTED economic growth, stilted priorities and confrontational governance under a decadent presidential system, the Philippines is finally enjoying unprecedented economic growth—like 114 other countries with parliamentary governments.

The emergence of young and capable political leaders, in combination with a world-class labor force, has encouraged bold entrepreneurial initiatives from the vibrant business sector. Major political parties are vying for votes on the strength of their party platforms rather than on their candidates' popularity. Gone are the days of political dynasties and scheming politicians who consider politics as a money-making venture rather than a public service commitment. Gone are the popular senatorial incompetents and movie actors. So are the days of the endless gridlock in the bicameral legislature, the anarchic street rallies and impeachment threats.

The years of toil, sacrifice and loneliness of our millions of overseas Filipinos, whose remittances kept afloat the government during the decadent decades of the presidential system, have been finally rewarded. After an enlightened Filipino electorate voted for the shift to the parliamentary system, we no longer send our labor force abroad to work under dehumanizing conditions. Our labor force and professionals now have the option to work in our own country and earn on the same pay scales offered by other countries.

Yes, the road to our political, social and economic deliverance was full of thorns. It was twice blocked by the selfish political ambitions of two Senate presidents, Jovito Salonga and Franklin Drilon, who coveted the presidency. Ousted President Joseph Estrada, charged with plunder, has been treated with kid gloves. Another actor, Fernando Poe Jr., a good man, was spared by the Almighty from being used and manipulated by scheming political has-beens. After the 2007 elections, the thinking electorate finally realized that the country's worsening paralysis could not be cured by the *moro-moro* of incompetent politicians, opportunists and clowns in government; that the Filipino nation rightfully deserved better leaders.

The principal proponents of the parliamentary system, Speaker Jose de Venecia and President Macapagal-Arroyo, whose political party won the majority seats in the first Parliament, initially served as our first prime minister and ceremonial president, respectively. But with their passing, new leaders, endorsed by vibrant and dynamic political parties, emerged. Earlier, the Supreme Court had ruled the Constituent Assembly was constitutional. It is heartening to know that the parliamentary system is thriving very well.

But then I woke up and realized that the "parliamentary vision" still awaits fulfillment.

—FRUCTUOSO SUZARA,
executive director,
Social Policy Advocacy,
15 Charleyville St.
White Plains, Quezon City

My Grandma was a superstar.

"She will always be a superstar in the hearts of many. Bright, bubbly, never ran out of kind words for just about everyone, giving full support, giving guidance, providing strength. That's how she will be remembered... forever."

Thanks to the Sanctuarium my grandma's star will forever shine in the hearts of family & friends. Beyond providing basic needs and services, the Sanctuarium offers something more valuable. A gift that will be treasured. Memories that will live forever.

A World Class Funeral Home... Sanctuarium offers funeral wake for cemetery burial.

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Climate change crisis

COMMENTARY

Alvin A. Mejia
John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues

WE ARE CAUSING OUR OWN DEMISE, THE Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns us. Its most recent report, "Climate Change: 2007," reaffirms two daunting realities: that humans have significantly contributed to the marked increase in the level of atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHGs) and that the continued GHG emissions at or above current rates will cause further warming and induce many never-before-seen changes in the global climate system in the years to come.

Developing countries, such as the Philippines, are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Indonesian Environmental Minister Rachmat Witoelar warns that Indonesia stands to lose 2,000 of its 18,000 islands to global warming by 2030. Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Azmi Khalid states that 1,200 sq km of Malaysia's coastline would be under water in 2060 if no measures to address the global problem of climate change will be adopted this early. Susmita Dasgupta of the World Bank recently reported that 56 million people in 84 developing countries could be displaced by a single-meter rise in sea level this century, as a predicted result of global warming. As for the Philippines, a Climate Change Task Force was recently formed to look into the possible effects of climate change on the country.

Developed countries have been made accountable for the increase in atmospheric GHGs because of their intense GHG-emitting activities since the industrial revolution. A study by the World Resources Institute (WRI) states that 76 percent of the total man-made GHG emissions from 1850 to 2002 came from developed countries. In fact, the annual per capita GHG emissions of developed countries in 2000 was 14.1 tons, as against a mere 3.3 tons from the developing countries.

A majority of the developed nations have acknowledged the fact that they have been major contributors to global GHG emissions and have agreed to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement that mandates signatory developed countries to reduce their GHG emissions by an average of 5.2 percent below their 1990 levels by the period 2008-2012.

However, the fight against climate change is not a battle to be fought by the developed countries alone. WRI estimates that the collective emissions of developing countries will constitute 55 percent of global GHG emissions by the year 2025, with China overtaking the United States as the world's largest GHG emitter. International cooperative mechanisms, such as the Clean Developed Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol, are important in setting the future direction of GHG emissions from developing nations.

The CDM is a mechanism established by the Kyoto Protocol. It aims to use international cooperation as a tool to fight climate change and help the industrialized countries meet their commitments to reduce their GHG emissions, by allowing them to implement clean projects in developing countries, where the costs are lower. It also provides developing countries with the much needed technologies that will hopefully bring their GHG emission to lower levels as they continuously strive for economic development.

The CDM showcases many different types of environment-friendly technologies. The Philippine CDM pipeline is currently dominated by methane recovery and electricity generation projects for swine facilities. Renewable energy resources, like wind, hydro and natural gas power plants, are also present in the Philippine CDM pipeline. There are other kinds of projects that are currently being developed in the local CDM arena such as fuel-switching, clean transport and energy efficiency projects.

There are currently 514 registered CDM projects, and eight of these are in the Philippines. The projects are estimated to reduce around 114 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year, 247,885 of which will come from our local CDM projects.

Aside from global cooperative mechanisms, individual actions against climate change are very important as well. Fighting climate change can be as simple as turning the lights off when not in use; re-using, reducing and recycling waste; and car-pooling.

Knowing that we are part of the problem gives us the freedom to be a part of the solution as well. Mitigating the hastened process of climate change is the responsibility of every nation, every institution and every individual.

INQUIRER *Visayas*

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Editor Jun Bandayrel
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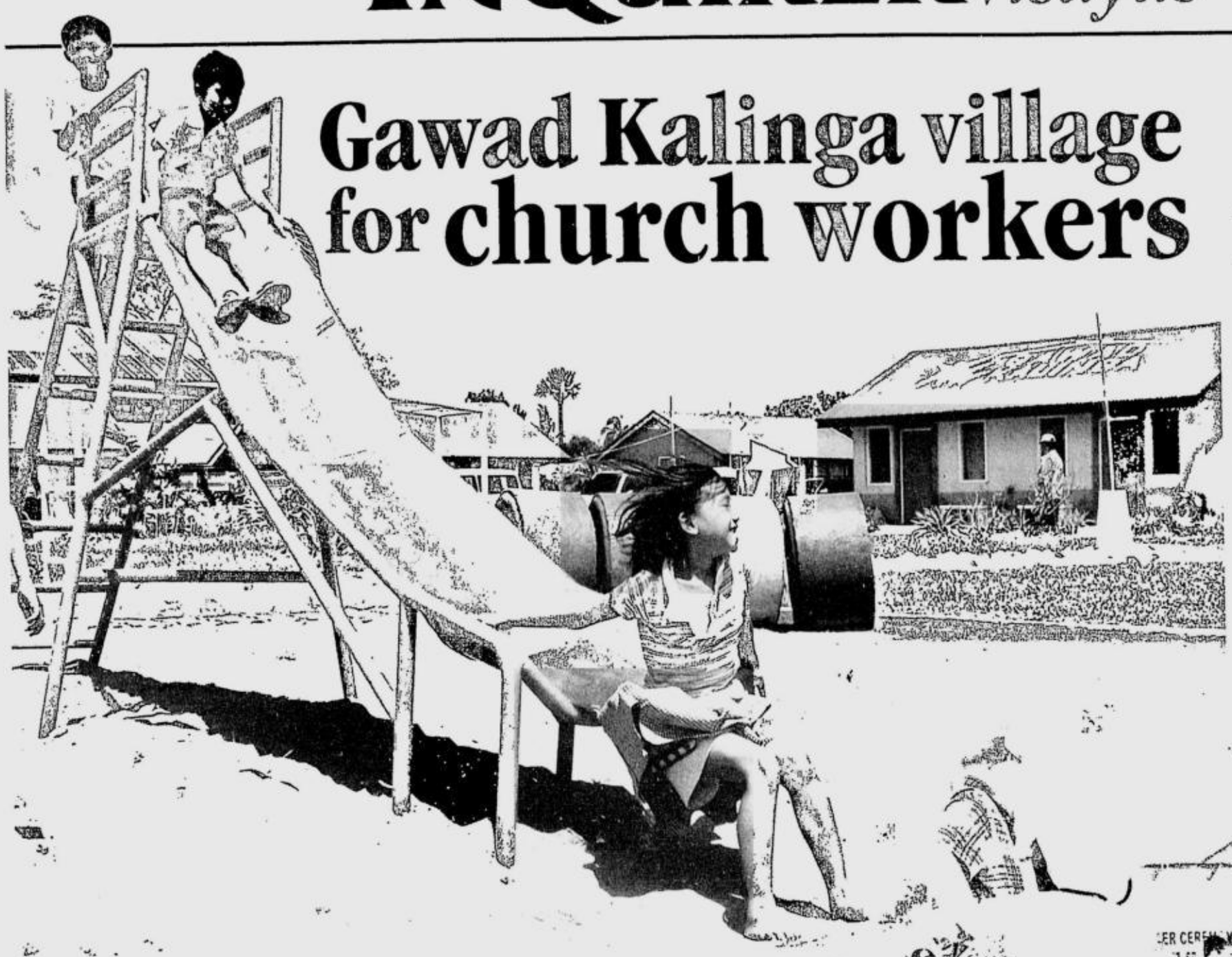
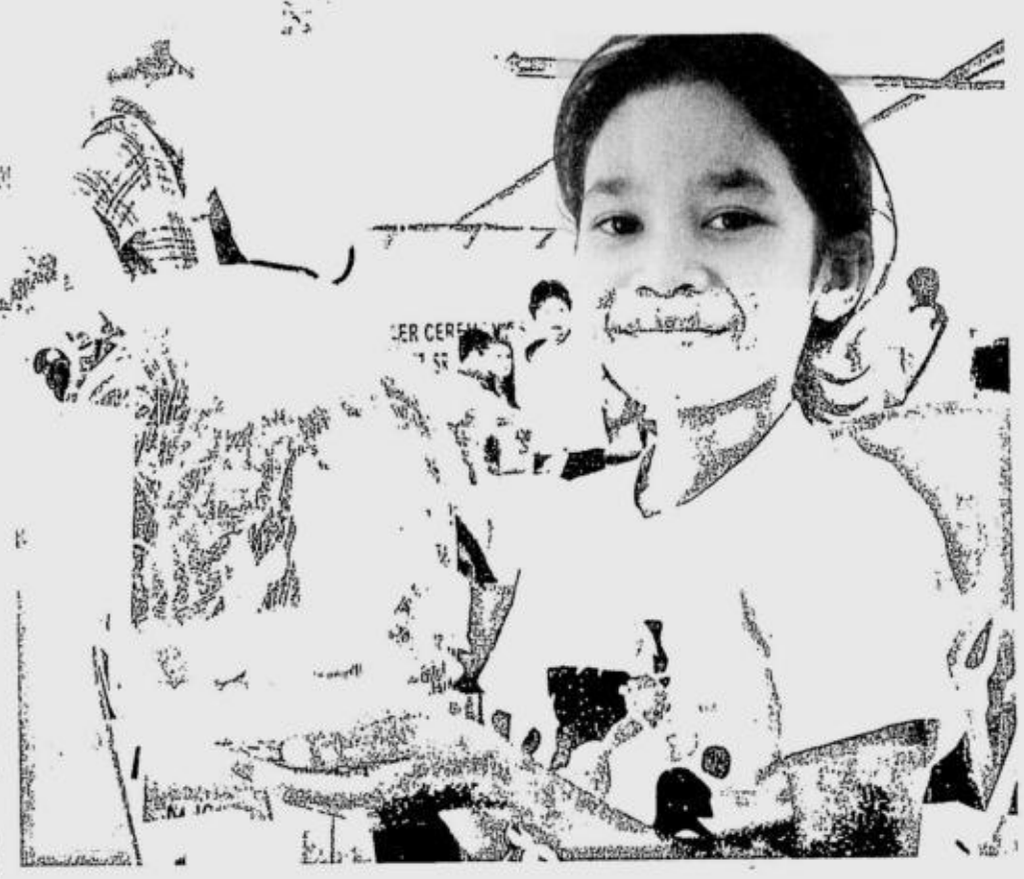
Gawad Kalinga village for church workers



OSCAR Lopez Sr. during the turnover ceremony of 50 houses at Barangay Buntatala, Jaro, Iloilo City. More than 100 houses with a playground and a Meralco Sibol school for kids were given church workers. Fifty houses were sponsored by the Lopez Foundation.



CHILDREN of the new homeowners enjoy the playground of Gawad Kalinga village at Barangay Buntatala, Jaro. The houses were built with the voluntary work of students, nongovernment organizations and beneficiaries for a year before they were turned over last Thursday in Iloilo City. PHOTOS BY ARNOLD ALMACEN

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Iloilo City

A NEW KIND OF "PEOPLE POWER" is sweeping across the land.

This power comes from a movement joined by big businessmen like Oscar Lopez, chair of the Lopez Group of Companies, and Sotero Tubula, plumber and janitor at the St. Vincent Ferrer Seminary in Jaro District in Iloilo City.

This movement has prompted girls of the exclusive Assumption School in Iloilo to dig holes for the septic tanks of new houses for poor families. It has also brought warring fraternities to help each other build house walls.

Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), has called this the new kind of people power that the country needed, 21 years after the peaceful Edsa Revolution that toppled Marcos rule in 1986.

"I feel that there is a shift in image in our celebration of People Power now. That image or icon now is Gawad Kalinga," said Lagdameo during the turnover rites of the Archdiocese of Jaro-Eugenio Lopez Sr.-Gawad Kalinga Village on Feb. 22.

The housing project for church workers is located at Barangay Buntatala in Jaro.

The Gawad Kalinga is a faith-based nongovernment organization that helps build housing projects for poor families through donations of companies, civic and other religious groups, overseas workers and government offices.

"If People Power liberated the country from the dictatorship, the People Power which is Gawad Kalinga is liberating the people from the dictatorship of poverty, homelessness and economic control," said Lagdameo.

> 'If People Power liberated the country from the dictatorship, the People Power which is Gawad Kalinga is liberating the people from the dictatorship of poverty, homelessness and economic control'

This ideal brings people together, rich and poor, and people from all levels of society, he said.

Msgr. Meliton Oso, archdiocesan social action center director, said the project was consistent with the Church's mission to help address the lack of houses of about 600,000 families in the country.

The beneficiaries are workers of parishes, churches and other church-based institutions who have been employed by the archdiocese for at least 10 years.

"This village is a gift for those who have faithfully served the Church through the years even if they received low wages," said Oso.

The archdiocese donated 1.6 hectares of land for the project and tapped the Gawad Kalinga to build the homes.

The Lopez Group of Companies, headed by Oscar Lopez, and the Association of Ilonggos in Washington D.C. provided the funds.

The village consists of 114 houses. The Lopez Group shouldered the building of 50 units, while the Association of Ilonggos raised the funds for 57 units. The Jaro Archdiocese funded seven units.

The beneficiaries were required to render 480 hours of "work equity" by helping build the houses or with the help of relatives and friends.

This is the first Gawad Kalinga village intended for Catholic Church workers in the country, said Oso.

Antonio Meloto, Gawad Kalinga executive director, said other dioceses are learning from the experience of the Jaro Archdiocese and want to build their own villages.

Meloto thanked those who have helped provide funds and labor. "We did not just give them houses, we gave them dignity and security," he said.

Heaven

Sotero Tubula, 62, said he was happy that after 43 years of working at the St. Vincent Ferrer Seminary, he would finally have his own house. He and his family, along with the families of his two children, used to stay in a house on a government lot in Barangay San Vicente in Jaro.

"I feel like I have received heaven. God has given us this gift," said Tubula.

Luz Emperado, 51, said she and her three children were happy. The two-bedroom duplex unit, measuring 20 square meters, may not be big but it is more than enough for them.

"We never expected that my long service for the Church would be rewarded with this. We are very grateful," said Emperado.

Meloto said the Gawad Kalinga had helped build 1,000 communities that has provided homes to 100,000 families or 500,000 Filipinos.

He said poverty could be significantly reduced if the rich families and big corporations shared their wealth in helping provide decent homes for the poor.

He called on the rich and landed families to emulate the Lopez family's campaign to go back to their roots in Iloilo by funding projects like the Gawad Kalinga and handing out grants.

Lagdameo said the Gawad Kalinga was "the work of the people."

"People Power has entered into a new consciousness through Gawad Kalinga ... This is [the consciousness] of people bonding together ... people extending their hand to one another ... people solving a part of the country's problems, never mind if they do not come in the millions."

Filipino MIT students pioneer in coral conservation

By Carla P. Gomez
Bacolod City

AT THE MARINE RESERVE IN SAGAY CITY, 82.9 kilometers north of Bacolod City, low-voltage current is being used to hasten coral growth five times and increase their survival by more than 20 times.

The method is called BioRock, which is being implemented by young Filipino students from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States with a grant from MIT, in cooperation with the Negros Occidental provincial government and some corporate sponsors.

MASSACHUSETTS Institute of Technology graduate students (from left) Emzo delos Santos, Gerardo Jose la O' and Martin Lorilla. CARLA GOMEZ

The First Step Coral project that the MIT students are implementing won the grand prize at the MIT 5th Ideas Competition in May last year. It was launched and pioneered at the Sagay Marine Reserve two months later, said team leader Gerardo Jose La O', a native of Negros Occidental who is currently a graduate student in material science at MIT.

The other members of the team are Iliac Diaz, Martin Lorilla and Emzo delos Santos, with Dr. Thomas Goreau, BioRock inventor, as their consultant.

The project primarily aims to rehabilitate coral reef resources and help increase reef fish populations that will boost the livelihood of countless fishing communities that depend on this vital resource, La O' said.

The BioRock method uses low-voltage direct current to electronically deposit calcium on metallic meshes placed close to the coral colonies, he said. "These calcium rich substances then promote [coral] growth rates up to five times and increase survivability by over 20 times during coral bleaching events."

Coral bleaching is the whitening of coral colonies mainly attributed to increased sea temperatures.

The other environmental changes that may cause coral bleaching include disease, sedimentation, cyanide fishing, pollution and salinity changes, according to the website of the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Coral Reef Information System (CoRIS).

According to La O', the Sagay Marine Reserve has three working models powered by renewable energy—solar panels, wind turbines and tidal turbines. The models were placed on Carbine Reef and Molocaboc Island, which are part of the 32,000-hectare reserve.

The Philippines has some of the most productive and most diverse coral reefs in the world but 95 percent of them are now in very poor condition due to a long history of erosion from deforested islands and heavy fishing using destructive methods, he said.

La O' hoped that the pioneering project would be replicated in other parts of the country.

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Army says civilians with guns are considered terror suspects

PATIKUL, SULU—CIVILians in the province carrying firearms would be considered terrorists, the military said yesterday.

The statement came as Army officials in the province said they would enforce an ID system for members of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

A ranking MNLF leader said the effects of the move would be felt by the entire Sulu population, which is more than 600,000.

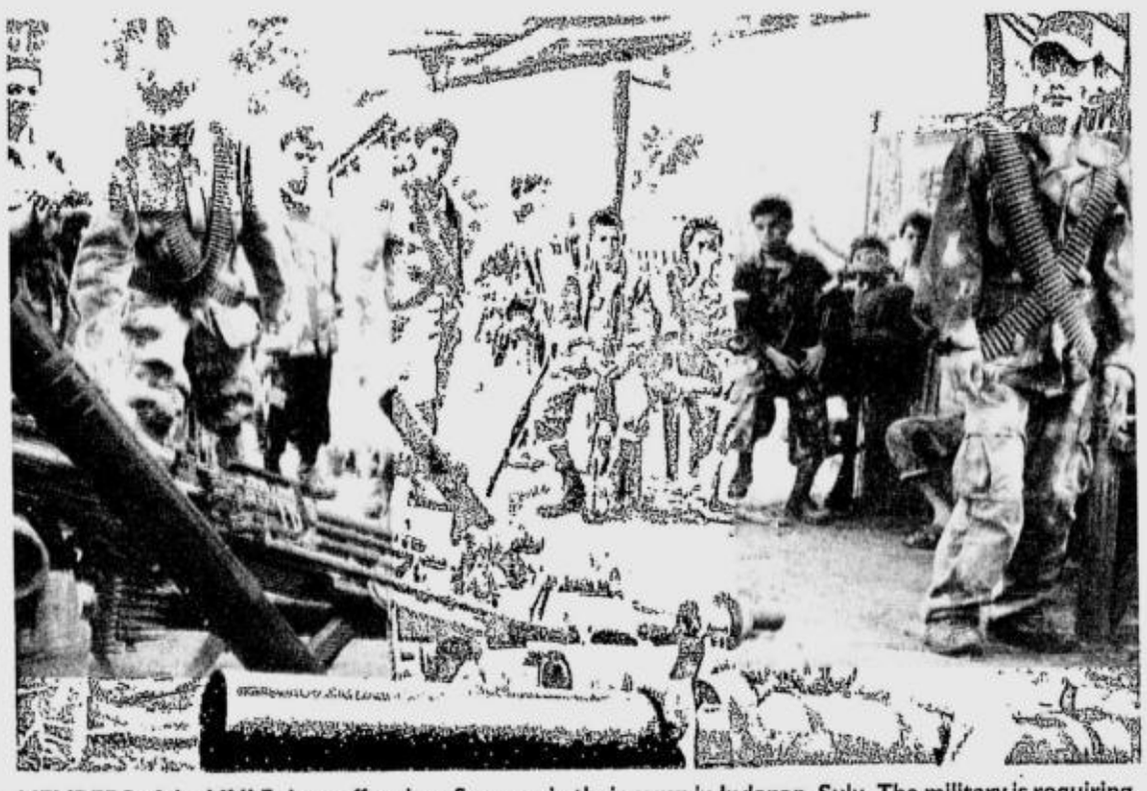
Ustadz Zain Jali, spiritual adviser to MNLF chair Nur Misuari, said about 90 percent of the people of Sulu belongs to the MNLF, which has a peace agreement with the government.

Lt. Gen. Eugenio Cedo, Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) said the ID system would help the military "determine who are the friendly forces on the ground."

"We are requesting the MNLF to identify themselves and have some IDs signed by military commanders so we can distinguish them from the other groups," Cedo said.

Brig. Gen. Ruperto Pabustan, commander of the Joint Special Operations Forces in Sulu, told the INQUIRER the ID system should have been enforced earlier.

Several clashes have erupted between soldiers and MNLF combatants in recent days because of alleged lack of coordination.



MEMBERS of the MNLF show off various firearms in their camp in Indanan, Sulu. The military is requiring them to wear IDs and has warned civilians against being tagged as terrorists if they were seen carrying guns.

JULIE ALIPALA/INQUIRER MINDANAO

The MNLF signed a peace agreement in 1996 but its members continue to hold on to their firearms.

Pabustan said the ID system will help the military identify who are the friendly forces.

"It's good if all of them have some form of IDs," he said.

Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban, commander of the 3rd Marine Brigade, said aside from the ID system, the military was also restricting the movement of armed people.

Sabban said civilians should not be carrying firearms to avoid being mistaken for terrorists.

"We (are sending a) strong message that whoever carries a gun is a terrorist. Aside from those authorized to carry a gun, anybody publicly displaying his firearm will be considered as somebody about to break the law," Sabban told the INQUIRER.

Sabban said the no firearm policy would also apply to MNLF forces in the province.

He said MNLF forces would only be allowed to carry guns inside their territories in Barangay Bitanag in Panamao and in Barangay Buanza in Indanan.

"We have already instructed our units (that) if they see an armed group roaming around then necessary actions will be taken even if they call themselves MNLF," Sabban said.

Khaid Adjibun, chair of the Lupah Sug State Revolutionary Command in Indanan, said they will never disarm until the 1996 peace agreement had been implemented in full.

He also said the MNLF in Sulu never worked with the Abu Sayyaf, as what some military commanders have been claiming.

As this developed, at least six soldiers were wounded during a clash with Abu Sayyaf bandits in Sulu.

Maj. Eugene Batara, Westmincom spokesperson, said the soldiers were on patrol when they clashed with the group led by Doctor Abu in Barangay Bulig Bawang in Parang town around 4 p.m. on Thursday.

"There were also reports that an undetermined number of Abu Sayyaf bandits were killed in the said clash," he said.

Al Mujahid Biao, MNLF deputy commander for military affairs, confirmed that the military had indeed engaged the Abu Sayyaf.

The Army's latest clash with the MNLF led to reports that a soldiers had been held captive by the armed group, which the MNLF denied.

Marine Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino clarified earlier reports that a soldier was taken as prisoner when Scout Rangers attacked an MNLF camp in Barangay Buanza here on Feb. 25.

Thirteen soldiers were wounded in what the military claimed was a clash with MNLF forces in the village of Baunza.

Dolorfino earlier reported that a wounded soldier was held captive by the MNLF.

On Wednesday night, Dolorfino said there was a "misunderstanding" regarding the report.

"The situation was chaotic. There was no soldier captured," said Dolorfino. *Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

N. Mindanao clashes leave 14 rebs, gov't soldiers dead

MALAYBALAY CITY—AT LEAST 14 people—a dozen of them rebels—were killed in separate clashes in Northern Mindanao on Thursday, the military said yesterday.

Maj. Samuel Sagun, public affairs officer of the Army's 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City, said the clashes occurred here and in Misamis Oriental.

In the 4:30 p.m. encounter in Barangay Kan-ayan here, which took place as Bukidnon was celebrating the annual Kaamulan thanksgiving festival, Sagun said that 10 rebels—two of them females—and two soldiers were slain. A soldier and two militiamen were also wounded in the gunfight.

Sagun identified the slain soldiers as Cpl. Antonio Jamanda and Pfc. Franklin Tan, both of the 26th Infantry Battalion.

The bodies of the slain rebels have been recovered but Sagun said the military has yet to identify them.

He said the gunfight took place when soldiers checked on the reported presence of New People's Army (NPA) rebels in the village.

He said the rebels eventually fled, leaving behind their dead comrades.

Aside from the dead rebels, the soldiers also recovered an M16 assault rifle and an M14 rifle, a Claymore mine and shells for M203 grenade launcher.

Poll strategy

Sagun said documents indicating the rebels' strategy for the midterm elections were also recovered from the site of the encounter.

Early Thursday morning, soldiers also killed a ranking communist leader and another rebel during a clash in Barangay Mosangot in Binuangan, Misamis Oriental.

Sagun said two rebels, both of them women, were also captured during the clash.

He identified one of the slain rebels as Loloy Saraos alias Queen/King, deputy commander of the Sector Committee 1 of the NPA's Front Committee 4B in Northcentral Mindanao.

The captured rebels were identified as Lenlen Cabusog alias Jinky and Anabel Mansequiao alias Aira and Tiray.

Sagun said Cabusog was wounded in the 45-minute gunfight and was rushed to the Northern Mindanao Medical Center for treatment while Mansequiao, the medical officer of the group, is currently being interrogated.

The NPA has become active anew in recent days.

In Toril, Davao City, two soldiers were killed when their group clashed with communist guerrillas in Barangay Eden on Wednesday morning.

Another soldier was also killed in an encounter with rebels in Davao Oriental on Monday morning.

The incident in Toril happened while soldiers, belonging to the 73rd Infantry Battalion, were responding to a tip from a resident about the presence of NPA rebels in the area.

"With the information provided by reliable source about the presence of the rebels in the vicinity of Eden, the troops immediately proceeded to the area to provide security to the residents," Lt. Col. Rolando Jose Bautista, spokesperson of the Army's 10th Infantry Division, said. *Grace Albasin with reports from Jeffrey Tupas and Dennis Santos, Inquirer Mindanao*

Digos Left leader is casualty No. 274

DAVAO CITY—A MILITANT LEADER in nearby Digos City was shot dead yesterday as the government continues to draw local and international criticisms for the extrajudicial killings occurring in the country.

Renato Pacaide became the 78th victim of extrajudicial killings in Southern Mindanao, and 274th nationwide, since 2001. But he was the first militant leader murdered in the region for 2007, according to human rights group Karapatan.

Pacaide, 53, provincial coordinator of Anakpawis in Davao del Sur, was standing at the corner of Rizal Avenue and Lim Street with his daughter when he was attacked around 10 a.m.

Chief Supt. Andres Caro, Southern Mindanao police chief, said the suspects rode a motorcycle.

Digos City police investigators said Pacaide was shot with a .45 cal. pistol. He took four bullets.

His daughter was not harmed.

Caro said the police were still investigating and were considering many angles, including Pacaide's recent activities.

"(He was) organizing union in the Nakayama Corp. in Digos, which is expected to lay-off around 80 laborers at the end of March," Caro said.

Nakayama is a Japanese-owned tile manufacturing firm.

But Kelly Delgado, secretary general of Karapatan in Southern Mindanao, said only the government has reasons to kill a militant leader like Pacaide.

"Nobody has the interest to topple down progressive groups but the government and its security agents. The government is resorting to a lot of ways to eliminate progressive groups and individuals, and party-list groups. And this is one of the moves of the Arroyo administration," Delgado said.

Pacaide's group, Anakpawis, also blamed the government for his death. *Jeffrey Tupas and Eldie Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao*

PAINT JOB

TONEE DESPOJO/CDN

A worker paints one of seven statues of angels that are displayed at the entrance of the Monastery of Marian Monks of the Eucharistic Parish Church in Simala, Sibunga in Cebu. The church is known as a site for devotees and pilgrims.

Scandal unsettles Abra kin of clinic attendant

By Gobleth Moulic
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—RELATIVES OF Hope Centeno in her native town in Abra have advised her to keep quiet, settle the issue privately and get her life back on track.

"I asked Hope to keep her mouth shut because she's up against big people," said Centeno's uncle, a local government official in Bucay town in Abra.

Centeno, the beauty clinic receptionist who reportedly had an affair with James Yap, husband of Kris Aquino, traces her roots to the fifth class town in Abra.

"I told her that's enough. She is not only dragging her family's name into the controversy but she's also creating trouble in other people's lives," Centeno's uncle told the INQUIRER by phone on Thursday.

He said he initially did not want to meddle in the personal affair of his niece until Centeno's parents asked him to intervene and persuade her to keep quiet.

"This is a purely private matter that should have been settled privately. I advised her not to grant interviews anymore since the media have been feasting on her story. She apologized for the mess she got herself into. I asked her not to ruin the lives of other people," he said.

The uncle asked the INQUIRER not to reveal his identity to "end all controversies involving the family."

He said: "She admitted she was wrong but insisted that when she met Yap, she thought he was not yet married. I told her that whatever it is, please stop it."

How did she react after her uncle gave his advice?

"She assured me that she will keep her mouth shut and that she will move on to her life. She promised me that her TV interview on Sunday would be her last," the uncle told the INQUIRER.

He said he was hoping his niece would listen to him and keep her word "for her sake, for the sake of her family and the people involved in the controversy."

'Very upset'

He said Centeno's father was "very upset" when he saw his eldest daughter appear on GMA's show biz program Star Talk and talk about her alleged 10-month affair with Yap.

"Why did you allow yourself to be involved with a married man since you have a lot of suitors? The man (Yap) even denied you on national TV," he quoted Centeno's father as saying.

Centeno's mother, a government employee, had stopped reporting for work since the scandal came out, claiming she was embarrassed to hear her officemates and friends talking about her daughter.

Why she came out

The uncle told the INQUIRER that before Centeno appeared on Star Talk, he had been hearing rumors about her "personal affairs."

He did not call up Centeno to confirm those reports since "she's in the right age and could decide for herself."

But he said Centeno had told him that a lawyer-friend had convinced her to air her side on Star Talk. She, however, did not identify the lawyer-friend.

"Hope said she wanted to clarify things. She said she wanted to clear her name," the uncle said.

When Centeno appeared on TV to reveal her alleged affair with Yap, her relatives and town mates in Abra were shocked to learn that a major character in this love triangle was one of their own.

Until now, they keep on wondering why Centeno, who was described by her relatives as "a simple provincial lass," was embroiled in a show biz scandal.

"Our town is very tranquil and it was shattered last Sunday following Hope's revelation. We were all stunned," a local official told the INQUIRER.

Centeno, eldest of five, grew up in Bucay, an agricultural town. She attended elementary and high school there. While she was growing up, she actively joined several beauty contests in her school and town. After finishing high school, she studied in a college in Quezon City.

Pangasinan pols slam Baby A on bloodshed alert

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LINGAYEN, PANGASINAN—THE province's political leaders reacted sharply to statements made by Vice Gov. Oscar Lambino and socialite Rosemarie "Baby" Arenas warning of bloodshed should Gov. Victor Agbayani continue putting up candidates in areas where incumbent officials are administration allies.

"They should be more honest with their facts. For the record, there is no incumbent Lakas candidate for [representative] in the third district. The incumbent congressman (Rep. Generoso Tulagan) is a member of the Kampi, and [he] is on his last term," Agbayani said in a statement.

Gallant Soriano, who is running for a House seat representing the province's third district, said Pangasinenses are not violent by nature.

The deputy customs commissioner asked the elder Arenas to be "more circumspect in her statements."

"She does not know Pangasinenses. She is not from here. Let's not scare the people. Let's be fair," said Soriano.

Contrary to Lambino's claim that he was recruiting party members and pitting them against incumbents, Agbayani said he has not drafted into Lakas-CMD any mayoral candidate in the third district.

Soriano a threat

"We have opened channels for dialogues, and for the record, only two out of six mayoral candidates in the district are running for reelection as incumbents. The rest are either graduating or fielding relatives in their places," he said.

He said the candidates were "perhaps threatened by the strong candidacy of [Deputy Customs Commissioner Gallant] Soriano whom I recruited to run for [representative] in the district, which is vacant."

Arenas' daughter, Rachel, wants to run for representative under Lakas-CMD. The other candidates are Bayambang Mayor Leocadio de Vera and Tulagan's son, Generoso Jr.

De Vera is a Lakas member but has been adopted by the Nationalist People's Coalition as a guest candidate for representative.

His supporters said he should have been the Lakas candidate but was elbowed out of the party when Lambino inducted Rachel Arenas into the party.

Imagination

At least three mayors from the third district called as "a figment of Arenas' imagination" Arenas' allegations that there would be bloodshed in Pangasinan should Agbayani put up mayoral candidates to face incumbents in the district.

"That's just Baby's belief. Nobody is saying there will be violence. Who wants hostility?" said San Carlos City Mayor Julian Resuello.

Resuello, who is fielding his son, Julier, to run for mayor in his city, said he would abide by the party decision on its official candidates. He challenged those not satisfied with party decisions to leave.

Outgoing Malasiqui Mayor Alfonso Soriano said he could not blame Arenas for speaking on her beliefs because her daughter was a candidate.

He said it was better for the candidates' supporters to shut up if their statements would hurt others.

SORIANO

NO PICNIC NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Tents are pitched beside a river in Barangay Travesia in Guinobatan, Albay by villagers who fled their communities following mudslides wrought by Supertyphoon Reming. The villagers have been living in these tents for two months now since they fled their homes.

Lapids face graft case for 'ghost' projects

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—PAMPANGA Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao yesterday filed a graft case against Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid and his son, Gov. Mark Lapid, for allegedly defrauding the government of P11.5 million by paying twice at least five road projects that were never undertaken in the first place.

In the complaint arising from what Guiao called "double funding and payment scheme," he also named as respondents at least 15 provincial capitol officials, three Department of Public Works and Highways officials and four private contractors.

In the 19-page complaint filed at the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon, Guiao accused the Lapids and 22 other respondents of fraud against the public treasury, malversation of public funds and violations of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act (Republic Act 3019) and Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees (RA 6713).

The penalties for these criminal offenses include prison terms and dismissal from the government service.

Complaint

Senator Lapid could not be reached for comment on the complaint, his ninth since he entered politics in 1992.

Of those, only one—involving the alleged anomalous purchase of a P104 million, 40-hectare land for housing—remained pending.

The complainant in that case is former Vice Gov. Cielo Macapagal-Salgado, the half-sister of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Governor Lapid on Thursday denied the supposed irregularity and called the filing of the case "politically motivated."

Guiao is the running mate of Board Member Lilia Pineda, the rival of the governor in his bid for a second term through the May 14 elections.

AN OVERZEALOUS fan tries to grab movie star and Pampanga Gov. Mark Lapid during a political rally in the province and ends up virtually slapping Lapid in the face. LYN RILLON

Transparency

Guiao has ruled out politics as motive, saying he has always demanded transparency and public accountability from the 28-year-old governor.

"It took me time to get the documents, complete the paper trail, study these enough to establish the pattern of anomaly," Guiao said to explain the timing of the case.

The complaint involved the improvement of farm-to-market roads in Barangay Concepcion in San Simon town, Barangays Mandili and Lourdes in Candaba town, Barangay Sto. Rosario in Magalang town, and Barangays Tabuyoc and Balucuc in Apalit town.

According to Guiao, a two-inch thick file of documents attached to the complaint showed that the respondents prepared and approved programs of work for each project, made double allotment and appropriation of funds for the same projects from the 20-percent development fund of the provincial government and from the pork barrel fund of Senator Lapid.

The respondents, Guiao said, were also responsible for the double disbursement and release of funds as well as double payments for the same projects.

No project

"Worse, respondents made it appear that the five projects were completed when in truth and in fact, they were not," Guiao said.

Barangay Captains Lucio Pelayo, Lamberto Manalili, Nestor Sanggalang, Pedro Balingit, Marcelino Galang and Bernardo Mutuc submitted affidavits that the projects were not undertaken in their villages or materials for those were not delivered.

Provincial Administrator Fidel Arcenas, also the governor's campaign manager and a respondent in the case, said Provincial Engineer Juanito Macatuno certified that the projects had been accomplished and these were completed through additional funds from the senator's pork barrel.

Governor Lapid said he issued a memorandum to Macatuno on Wednesday to "explain in full the circumstances of the matter or face appropriate legal actions if his answers were not satisfactory."

"I welcome this probe. The [Office of the Ombudsman] is an appropriate forum to clear me and my father of accusations," he said.

Mining firm questions court order on nickel

A MINING FIRM QUESTIONED a court order that supposedly prohibited it from shipping out 300,000 metric tons of nickel from its mines in Palawan.

"A lower court does not have the power to direct a Cabinet official to defy the order of Malacañang," said Joaquin Obieta of the Corporate Counsels Philippines, legal counsel of the Platinum Group Metals Corp. (PGMC).

Obieta's statement, which was sent to the INQUIRER by e-mail, was in reaction to an order by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 76 preventing PGMC from exporting some 300,000 metric tons of nickel.

Confiscation order

In its decision, the trial court also ordered Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes to enforce the confiscation order against PGMC pending a decision on a petition filed by Citinickel Mines and Development Corp.

Obieta said a motion filed by PGMC questioned the legality of the order as "only the Supreme Court can issue a status quo order since the case between the Citinickel Mines and Development Corp. and PGMC had already been elevated to the Office of the President."

The suits stemmed from a unilateral termination of an agreement between PGMC and the Olympic Mines in the extraction of 50,000 tons of nickel per year in Narra, Barangay San Isidro and Pulot in Barangay Labog, Sofronio, Española in Palawan.

"A decision was already rendered in favor of PGMC last Feb. 26. A regional trial court cannot order the (environment) secretary to disobey and defy an order from the Office of the President," said Obieta. *Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Danding wife drops out of race for House seat

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—ENVIRONmentalist and philanthropist Gretchen Oppen Cojuangco, wife of business tycoon Eduardo Cojuangco, announced yesterday she has dropped her plan to run for a seat in the House of Representatives now occupied by her son.

In a statement, Cojuangco, who announced her decision to run two weeks ago, said she reached this decision not to run in the fourth congressional district she prayed hard.

Cojuangco was to run for the seat that will be vacated by her son, Carlos, who is now on his third and last term.

"After all these weeks of trying to discern the path that I should take. I have come to the conclusion that it is better to continue pursuing my personal advocacies for women, children and the environment, outside of politics ...," said Ms Cojuangco in her statement.

She said in her prayers, she realized "that the Almighty Father would rather I remain in private life, doing my duties as a wife, mother and grandmother."

She also said that it was her belief that she could be more efficient and helpful to the country in her personal capacity "unhampered by bureaucratic realities."

Cojuangco also apologized to her friends and would-be constituents who believed in her capabilities even as she urged them to vote wisely.

"Let us remain united and work together as we choose public officials who share the same vision and mission with us ...," she said.

Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Marañon said La Carlota Mayor Jeffrey Ferrer would run for congressman of the fourth district as the official candidate of the Nationalist People's Coalition-United Negros Alliance in Cojuangco's place.

DPWH to candidates: Spare bridges

DAGUPAN CITY—A PUBLIC works official in Pangasinan has asked the Commission on Elections to spare bridges from political candidates' posters and other campaign materials, saying "it is expensive to have them cleaned and repainted."

Rodolfo Dion, district engineer of the Department of Public Works and Highways covering the second and fourth districts of Pangasinan, said the districts have at least 68 bridges, under the maintenance of the national government, whose railings are normally covered with campaign posters during the election period.

He said it takes as much as P200,000 to repaint the railings of a kilometer-long span of a bridge. This amount excludes expenses for removing the posters and cleaning the railings after the elections, he said.

Newly painted bridges

"We do not use ordinary paint, but reflectorized paint, so it is expensive," he said.

The second district has two newly painted bridges—the kilometer-long Domalandan Bridge and 800-meter Bañaga Bridge—both connecting capital town Lingayen and Bugallon town.

The DPWH is monitoring the bridges daily to prevent politicians from making them their poster areas, Dion said.

Campaign materials

He said he had asked the Comelec to include the pasting or putting up of campaign materials on national bridges among the prohibited acts under its guidelines.

The Comelec has given to the DPWH the task of removing illegally pasted posters nationwide.

The Comelec told DPWH to designate a representative who will be the third member of the task forces created to tear down and remove unlawful campaign materials in every region, legislative district, city and municipality. The other members are the local election officer as chair and the local police station chief as vice chair.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. earlier said the agency would be stricter in enforcing the rules on campaign posters. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

BARANGAY officials in this Cebu District were surprised to find another set of posters on walls along Mango Avenue, that of senatorial candidate Prospero Pichay, a day after clearing the same walls of posters of Manuel Villar and Edgardo Angara. JUNJE MENDOZA/CDN

LAND AWARDS. Vice President Noli De Castro leads the distribution of certificates of lot award to beneficiaries in Nagcarlan, Laguna assisted by senatorial candidate Mike Defensor, Laguna Gov. Teresita S. Lazaro and Nagcarlan Mayor Rosendo Corales (partly hidden). CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Noli awards PNR land to homeless in Laguna

VICE PRESIDENT AND HOUSING AND URban Development Coordinating Council chair Noli De Castro awarded idle pieces of property of the Philippine National Railway to homeless families of Alaminos, Nagcarlan and Los Baños in Laguna.

"This is a fulfillment of the government's promise to provide shelters for the homeless in Laguna," De Castro said.

In Alaminos, around 1,200 families received their certificates of lot award. The awarding was a continuation of last December's implementation of the asset reform program when the vice president awarded lots to 550 homeless families in the town.

"*Ang awarding na ito ay tanda ng inyong pagkakaroon ng* shelter security, *matapos ang mahabang panahon ng paninirahan dito nang walang katiyakan* (This means shelter security after living in uncertainty for a long time)," De Castro said.

In Nagcarlan, some 800 certificates of lot were awarded to beneficiaries. De Castro said more families in the town would be provided with their own house and lots pending the utilization of more noncore property of the PNR in the area for social housing.

He said the lot distributions were made possible through President Macapagal-Arroyo's asset reform program.

"*Alam ko po marami pa ang walang sariling bahay at lupa sa inyo nguni't hindi po tumitigil ang pamahalaan upang paghandaan ang pangangailangan na 'yan* (I know many of you do not own your own homes, but the government will not stop working to solve the housing problem)," he said.

In Los Baños, around 3,363 families are expected to benefit from the implementation of Presidential Proclamation No. 550, which would grant families titles covering a parcel of Camp El Ridge Military Reservation Area.

De Castro said aside from the noncore PNR properties, the government was also tapping idle military properties to meet the country's housing requirements.

Comelec orders probe of campaigning soldiers

By Nikko Dizon and Christine O. Avendaño

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. yesterday called on the Armed Forces of the Philippines to investigate reports that soldiers were engaging in partisan politics in Metro Manila.

"It has been brought to my attention that men in AFP uniform in batches have been allegedly going house to house, intimidating civilians and campaigning actively against certain candidates and party-list organizations participating in the upcoming ... elections," Abalos said in a letter to Maj. Gen. Ben Dolorfino, chief of the AFP's National Capital Region Command.

Abalos said such activities had supposedly taken place in Parola, Isla Puting Bato, and Del Pan, all in Tondo, Manila.

"I urge you to please conduct an immediate investigation into these allegations, and to immediately inform me of the outcome of such investigation," he said.

Also yesterday, the Gabriela Women's Party filed a complaint before the Comelec against the AFP chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, and Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol for election code violations and for engaging in partisan politics.

Rep. Liza Maza told the INQUIRER the military had been harassing Gabriela members in Metro Manila and denounced the alleged presence of soldiers in barangay halls and chapels in certain areas in Quezon City.

Nothing to do with polls

"They (Esperon, Gonzales and Apostol) ... are using the resources of government and their position to ... actively campaign against the progressive party-list organizations," Maza said.

The military said the deployment of soldiers in some areas of Metro Manila was part of civil military operations in certain barangays where issues like poverty can be exploited by communist insurgents.

It has nothing to do with campaigning for or against any candidates in the May polls, the military said.

Army spokesperson Maj. Ernesto Torres said the deployments had been going on since November last year and were mostly in depressed barangays.

AFP mandate

Troops are sent to barangays where they stay and "talk to (residents), ask them how they are doing and tell them there are programs of government which they can avail [themselves] of," Torres said in a phone interview.

Torres said this was a "holistic approach" in addressing the insurgency problem.

AFP spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro said such deployments were "normal" as it was the AFP-NCRCom mandate to "protect Metro Manila."

"One thing definite, their deployment is not to campaign for or against anybody. They're just performing their mission," Bacarro said.

Soldiers prowling slums

From page A1

After failing to get the list, the soldiers next went to the house of Kena's woman president, believed to be a member of the militant women's group Gabriela, but didn't find her.

"They kept coming back to see her, but each time, she was out. Our kids are getting afraid," the resident's husband said in an interview.

Under martial law?

Apparently, the military suspected Kena of being an affiliate of Gabriela, and its officials of being members of the activist group.

In a meeting they called at the barangay hall on Jan. 15, the soldiers told residents they were there to keep law and order, and help out in their land dispute with the government.

"One of the residents had the courage to ask if we're under martial law. That's the time the soldiers explained their presence there," said Gloria Rodriguez, a member of Karapatan.

Toward the end, the soldiers made a campaign pitch. They urged residents not to vote for certain party-list groups, claiming such groups would be their ruin, according to Rodriguez.

Where Ka Bel lives

It wasn't surprising that the military picked Barangay Commonwealth to make their presence felt.

Detained Anakpawis party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran keeps a house in the area. It also has one of the largest concentrations of members of Gabriela, Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Kadamay, Migrante, Anakbayan and Kabataan party-list in Metro Manila.

It appeared that soldiers were also deployed in Payatas, Quezon City, and in urban poor communities in other areas of the metropolis, like Caloocan City and Manila.

Bayan Muna member Alberto Corbes had his own story to tell yesterday.

He said that while he was walking in Payatas on Feb. 26, a soldier stopped him to ask why he was carrying Bayan Muna application forms.

Presence in 26 barangays

"He told me: 'Don't you know that Bayan Muna is a front for the NPA (New People's Army)? Stop campaigning and recruiting people'."

Corbes said that when he told the soldier that "we're not NPAs," the soldier told him that "If I didn't stop, I won't live long enough to see Holy Week."

Three days later, at around 2 a.m., Corbes said he was roused from sleep when unidentified men broke down the door of his house and hurled rocks at him, hitting him in the foot.

Bayan Muna Representatives Teodoro Casiño and Satur Ocampo told reporters they would file complaints against the soldiers with the Commission on Elections for electioneering, as well as criminal and administrative charges for harassing their members.

Ocampo and Casiño said the deployment of soldiers in some barangays in Metro Manila was part of the military's ongoing special counter-operations against progressives.

Malacañang's hand

"Malacañang has complicity here," Ocampo said.

The lawmakers said anti-party-list operations were detailed in two military documents, titled "CPP-NPA-NDF Party-list Operations for 2004 Elections," and "AFP Onward to Political Warfare Arena" in 2007.

The first document focused on "denial operations" against party-list groups in their strongholds in 305 cities and towns. The second outlined the military's counter-organizing operations against party-list organizations in urban centers.

Bayan Muna said it had received complaints from members about harassment by soldiers deployed in urban poor communities in the metropolis.

"We will be remiss if we don't raise this with the public. Before we know it, the killings could be happening here in Metro Manila," Casiño said.

Know the enemy

The complaints against the soldiers included tearing down party-list election posters.

Soldiers also showed a video—titled "Knowing The Enemy"—to residents in Sta. Mesa and handed out "anti-party-list leaflets" in Pandacan, according to a staffer of the Inter-Faith JPIC (Justice and Peace, and Integrity of Creation) Network, a group composed of religious congregations.

They were also conducting surveillance on party-list members in Bagong Silang, Camarin and Tala, Caloocan, said the Inter-Faith staffer.

Bishop Antonio Tobias of the Novaliches Diocese said he had met with residents of urban poor communities in Quezon City and they complained about the military presence in their barangays.

Sabalza memo

"The soldiers were supposedly asking questions about party-list members," Tobias said.

Residents of Barangay Commonwealth gave the INQUIRER a photocopy of a purported Nov. 28, 2006 memorandum to Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. from assistant city administrator Manuel Sabalza citing the reasons for the deployment of 21 soldiers in the barangay.

The memo said the deployment was facilitated by Lt. Col. Melquiades Feliciano of the Civic Military Operations Battalion and the contingent in the barangay was headed by one Maj. Godfrey Obera.

The goal of the contingent of three officers and 18 enlisted men is to "maintain peace and order," and serve as "bridge to the solution of problems and concerns" in the barangay, the memo said.

The memo also said: "Tentative period of posting: one month."

Until now, barangay residents said, the soldiers are still prowling around.

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CEBU PACIFIC
It's time everyone flies.

We'll always have Paris, experiment teaches AP

From page A1

Press, we put out an initial item of some 300 words. But it actually meant more to us than that.

It meant the end of our experimental blackout on news about Paris Hilton.

It was only meant to be a weeklong ban—not the boldest of journalistic initiatives, and one, we realized, that might seem hypocritical once it ended. And it wasn't based on a view of what the public should be focusing on—the war in Iraq, for example, or the coming election of the next leader of the free world, as opposed to the doings of a partygoing celebrity heiress/reality TV star most famous for a grainy sex video.

No, editors just wanted to see what would happen if we didn't cover this media phenomenon, this creature of the Internet gossip age, for a full week. After that, we'd take it day by day. Would anyone care? Would anyone notice? And would that tell us something interesting?

It turned out that people noticed plenty—but not in the way that might have been expected. None of the thousands of media outlets that depend on AP called in asking for a Paris Hilton story. No one felt a newsworthy event had been ignored. (To be fair, nothing too out-of-the-ordinary happened in the Hilton universe.)

The reaction was to the idea of the ban, not the effects of it. There was some internal hand-wringing. Some felt we were tinkering dangerously with the news. Whom, they asked, would we ban next? Others loved the idea. "I vote we do the same for North Korea," one AP writer said facetiously.

Paris blackout

The experiment began on Feb. 19. A few days before, the AP had written from Austria about Hilton's appearance at the Vienna Opera ball, just ahead of her 26th birthday. We didn't cover her weekend birthday bash in Las Vegas.

During "blackout week," the AP didn't mention Hilton's second birthday party at a Beverly Hills restaurant, at which a drunken friend reportedly was ejected by security after insulting Paula Abdul and Courtney Love. And editors asked our Puerto Rico bureau not to write about her visit there to hawk her fragrance. However, her name did slip into copy unintentionally three times, as background: in stories about Britney Spears, Nicole Richie and even in the lead of a story about Democrats in Las Vegas.

Then Hilton was arrested on Feb. 27 for driving with a suspended license—an offense that could conceivably lead to jail time because she may have violated conditions of a previous sentence. By that time, our blackout was over anyway, so reporting the development was an easy call. (On the flip side, we never got to see what repercussions there would have been if we hadn't.)

Ban over

Also by then, an internal AP memo about the ban had found its way to the outside world. The New York Observer quoted it on Wednesday, and the Gawker.com gossip site linked to it. Howard Stern was heard mentioning the ban on his radio show, and calls came in from various news outlets asking us about it. On Editor and Publisher magazine's website, a reader wrote: "This is INCREDIBLE, finally a news organization that can see through this evil woman." And another: "You guys are my heroes!"

We felt a little sheepish that the ban was over, and braced ourselves for the comments that would come when people realized it wasn't permanent.

We also learned that Lloyd Grove, former columnist for the New York Daily News, had attempted a much longer Paris Hilton blackout. He began it a year into his "Lowdown" column and stuck to it, he says, for two years until the column was discontinued last October—except for a blind item (no names) about Hilton crashing a pre-Oscar party.

Celebutante

So was Grove attempting to raise the level of discourse in our society by focusing on truly newsworthy subjects?

Well, not really. "The blackout was a really heartfelt attempt on my part," he says, "to get publicity for myself."

A trait that Hilton, it must be said, has turned into an art. Grove thinks the so-called "celebutante" achieved her unique brand of fame because she boasts an irresistible set of traits: wealth, a big name, beauty with a "downmarket" appeal, and a tendency to seem...oversexed. "This is what mainstream society celebrates," he says. "She is, in the worst sense, the best expression of the maxim that no bad deed goes unrewarded in our pop culture."

One measure of Hilton's fame: She was No. 5 last year on the Yahoo Buzz Index, a list of overall top searches on the website. (Her ever-so-brief buddy Spears is a perennial No. 1.)

Another is that US Weekly has at least a mention or a photo in just about every issue. "People now come to expect to see pictures of her," says Caroline Schaefer, deputy editor of the celebrity magazine. "They're intrigued by her unshakable self-esteem. People are fascinated by that."

Lessons from Paris

Jeff Jarvis, who teaches journalism at the City University of New York, decries the "one-size-fits-all disease" afflicting media outlets, who feel that "everybody's covering it, so we must, too." Even The New York Times, he noted, had substantial coverage of a hearing concerning where Anna Nicole Smith—perhaps the one person who rivaled Hilton in terms of fame for fame's sake—would be buried.

"That disease leads to the Paris Hilton virus spreading through the news industry," says Jarvis, who puts out the BuzzMachine blog.

So what have we learned from the ban? "It's hard to tell what this really changes, since we didn't have to make any hard decisions," says Jesse Washington, AP's entertainment editor. "So we'll continue to use our news judgment on each item, individually."

Which means that for the immediate future, if not always, we'll still have Paris. *AP*

PCGG: Coco levy compromise ...

From page A1

which it will be presented to the stakeholders for ratification.

Farmers' representatives

The coconut farmers will be represented by some 30 national and regional farmers' groups which met with President Macapagal-Arroyo in Davao City last month.

The government has organized two national and 10 regional consultation sessions to ensure that an amicable settlement is reached with the farmers, Sabio said.

Based on the results of the consultations and the DOF proposal, the PCGG, through the Office of the Solicitor General, will draft the final document outlining the "amicable settlement."

The PCGG chair urged various groups, including several nongovernment organizations that have been critical of the plan, to support it, or risk having the coco levy funds tied up in litigation for "another 20 years."

2 blocks of SMC shares

There are two blocks of SMC shares involved in the coco levy controversy. The proposed compromise settlement will deal solely with the 27-percent block under the name of the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF).

The 27-percent block is part of the 47-percent block of SMC shares that the government sequestered in 1986 on the ground that they were bought with coco levy funds. The Sandiganbayan anti-graft court awarded this block of shares to the government in 2004.

The ownership of a 20 percent block of shares controlled by businessman Eduardo Cojuangco, the SMC chair, is still under court litigation. Although the Sandiganbayan allowed Cojuangco to vote the shares, he is not allowed to sell them while their ownership has not been settled.

Cojuangco himself will not be represented in the foundation.

"For now, what I understand would happen [is that] it would be limited to the 27 percent, and the litigation would go on with respect to the 20 percent if there is no final agreement," Sabio explained.

The coco levy funds, now estimated at P130 billion, are distributed in a variety of businesses and companies.

The government claims that Cojuangco, who was appointed by Marcos as administrator of the levy, with his associates used the levy funds to buy shares in SMC, the United Coconut Planters Bank, and various coconut trading firms, coconut oil mills and export firms.

These acquired assets were not placed in the name of the Philippine Coconut Authority, the government agency tasked to develop the coconut industry, but under 14 holding companies under the CIIF owned by six oil mills. These assets were held by the UCPB, the CIIF administrator.

IN THE KNOW

THE 27 PERCENT STAKE IN SAN Miguel Corp. is part of the various assets acquired with the funds from the coco levy imposed by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos on coconut farmers between 1972 to 1982 for the ostensible development of the coconut industry.

In 1975, Marcos authorized the Philippine Coconut Authority, the agency tasked with developing the coconut industry and whose board included businessman Eduardo Cojuangco, to use the funds to buy a bank "for the benefit of the farmers."

The bank was the First United Bank, later renamed the United Coconut Planters Bank. Cojuangco became its president and chief executive officer.

With the PCA and UCPB in their control, Cojuangco and his associates were able to buy firms and mills, placed under the Coconut Industry Investment Fund, a group of 14 holding companies whose assets include the SMC shares. These assets were held by the UCPB, the CIIF administrator.

The assets were sequestered by the Presidential Commission on Good Government in 1986. In 1998, however, Cojuangco regained control of the companies under the CIIF, including the SMC.

Public funds

The PCGG filed cases in the Sandiganbayan against Cojuangco, claiming the CIIF and other assets were acquired using the coco levy funds.

In December 2001, the Supreme Court declared the coco levy funds as "prima facie (apparently) public funds," but left the Sandiganbayan to decide who owned the assets acquired with the funds.

In May 2004, the Sandiganbayan awarded to the government the 27 percent block of SMC shares. The farmers claimed this as their own because it was bought using the coco levy funds.

The 27 percent stake is now only about 25 percent after it was diluted with the investment of Japanese brewer Kirin in SMC.

The ownership of another 20 percent block of SMC shares controlled by Cojuangco is still under dispute.

Lawrence de Guzman, Inquirer Research

GMA sets 9% GDP target in three years to lick poverty

From page A1

and Development Authority said the economy likely grew anywhere between 5.3 and 5.6 percent in 2006. The government set the GDP target at 5.5 percent for that year.

Salceda, an economic adviser to the President even before he joined the Cabinet, said bringing down the unemployment rate was the key to breaking the cycle of poverty in the country.

Jobs cut poverty

He said the President's economic team subscribed to the idea that "GDP creates jobs and jobs reduce poverty."

He said the President was partly frustrated that the economy's current 5 to 6 percent growth rate "does not really grow enough jobs to absorb the new labor force immediately."

"She wants to do more," said the former representative from Albay who helped craft many of the administration's fiscal reform measures that helped to lift the economy.

He said the Arroyo administration inherited 4.4 million unemployed people from the short-lived Estrada administration.

With the 1.2 million job requirements yearly since 2001, the country has about 11.2 million currently unemployed Filipinos, he said.

The government was able to produce only 897,000 jobs for each one of the six years under Ms Arroyo.

Therefore, the unemployment rate and poverty incidence will only be reversed if the economy grows by as much as 9 percent—7 percent this year, 8 percent next year and 9 percent in 2009, Salceda said.

Plan 7, 8, 9

This is the so-called "Plan 7,8,9" unveiled by Malacañang two weeks ago.

Every 1 percent GDP growth creates about 804,000 jobs, so the government wants to accelerate growth from the usual 5 to 6 percent per year to 7 to 9 percent to drastically bring down the number of unemployed, Salceda explained.

"The President's new internal mantra is 8 on 8. That's the new policy agenda," he said, referring to job opportunities, cost of living improvement, peso appreciation, investment enhancement, an education program that is pro-poor, health care/housing/hunger, antiterrorism, and a green Philippines.

He said the plan was "doable" because the inflation rate now is lower than during Estrada's time while the GDP is higher today compared with the period from 1998 to 2000.

He cited debt service as one proof that the government has the capacity now to reduce poverty. Last year the country paid P864 billion in debt service but this year it only paid P601 billion.

Business confidence

This will be further enhanced by the soon-to-be-signed P2007 budget which is higher by P200 billion than last year's budget, and the deficit that is expected to go down to P63 billion this year.

Salceda said Plan 7,8,9 was achievable despite the character of politics in the country, citing the following:

- The Makati Business Club said that 81 percent of its members believed that the economy would be much better this year compared to 2006. Business confidence is at the highest in 11 years.
- The stock market in 2006 marked a 10-year high, posting a 42 percent gain.
- The real estate market grew at its fastest rate in 25 years, when it grew by 26.2 percent in the 3rd quarter of 2006.
- The Philippines ranked second, after India, in terms of business confidence worldwide, according to the International Business Report of Grant Thornton International's survey of 32 countries.

GO cancels Antique rally, second time in a week

From page A1

GO campaign sortie in Panay, said in a telephone interview that the party's national headquarters directed them to cancel the trip "for security reasons." He could not say whether it was related to the alleged threats that caused the cancellation of the GO rally in Iloilo City last Wednesday.

Ejercito, however, denied this.

"It's political ... a local candidate issue," he told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Cañeda said the candidates and the campaign team were instead directed to return to Manila yesterday for a meeting "to assess the performance of the candidates."

The GO candidates including Francis "Chiz" Escudero, Loren Legarda, Sonia Roco, Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, Anna Dominique "Nikki" Coseteng, John Osmeña and Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III were in Iloilo on Wednesday and in Capiz on Thursday.

Former Assemblyman Arturo Pacificador, who's being considered the opposition candidate for provincial governor, said the GO candidates were scheduled to arrive in Bugasong town, Antique around 8 a.m. yesterday from Roxas City, motor to the capital town of San Jose and meet with the students there.

They also scheduled a press conference at noon at Pacificador's residence in Barangay Lapaz in Hamtic town.

Pacificador also said the rally was cancelled for security reasons.

Pacificador, who was tried for the murder of his political rival, Evelio Javier, in 1986, was exonerated in 2004.

Threat or gimmick?

Last Wednesday, the GO's rally in Iloilo City was canceled after the opposition camp in Iloilo allegedly received calls and text messages warning of violence if the rally pushed through.

But Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas, a close ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said there were no reports from the city's police force of any threats as alleged by provincial administrator Manuel Mejorada who disclosed the alleged threats to reporters.

Treñas, in a telephone interview, called the alleged threats as a "publicity gimmick because only 100 supporters showed up" in the rally at the Iloilo provincial capitol.

"If we can maintain the peace and safety of a million people attending the Dinagyang, we are surely capable of securing a much smaller and controlled crowd like a political rally," said Treñas, referring to the annual Ati-Atihan festival of the city.

Serious incident

However, Iloilo Governor Niel Tupas said he received two calls from his allies warning of a "serious incident" had the rally pushed through. He was not one to take these things lightly.

"The safety of everyone is important. The senatorial candidates can always come back," he said.

At round 7:30 p.m., half an hour after the scheduled start of the GO rally in Iloilo City, two entertainers, Tiya Pusit and Inday Garutay, were working up a sparse crowd of about 100 when Iloilo provincial administrator Manuel Mejorada went up the stage in front of the Iloilo provincial capitol and announced that the rally was being called off because of a threat.

Mejorada told the crowd that the decision was reached after an exchange of phone calls between Tupas, Sen. Franklin Drilon, Ejercito and himself.

From bad to worse?

The senatorial candidates—Aquino, Roco, Coseteng, Osmeña, Pimentel, Escudero and Legarda—were still traveling to Iloilo City from the town sorties when the announcement was made. Instead of proceeding to the rally, they went to dyFM Bombo Radyo for a live interview.

For his part, Presidential Political Adviser Gabriel Claudio said the cancellation of GO's first provincial rally in Iloilo was not due to any alleged threats.

"I think the opposition will have to admit that the campaign or the rally of GO in Iloilo was canceled simply because they could not muster more than a hundred participants," Claudio said.

With no machinery, no crowds and no unity, the GO campaign could only go from bad to worse, he added.

In contrast, Claudio said the "formidable government machinery" would soon be harnessed to spell victory for Team Unity and the administration's local candidates.

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo was satisfied with Team Unity's campaign and showing thus far, saying it was more organized and better received by the people than the opposition ticket.

Ominous sign

Team Unity media chief Ben Evardone said the cancelation of the Capiz rally was an "ominous sign" for GO.

In a text message to the INQUIRER, Evardone said: "Their campaign is collapsing from the absence of a well-defined organization and the lack of grassroots support. GO is trying to mask its weakness by resorting to all kinds of antics which reveal that it is bankrupt of ideas and legitimate issues."

According to Claudio, the opposition is hard put to organize rallies because there are only three provinces and two cities (Makati and San Juan) which are identified with the opposition.

And not all of those officials, he said, were "outspokenly against" the administration. "So it's very clear that the opposition is very chaotic and the administration has nothing to do with it. The opposition has the right to its self-destruction."

Belittles survey results

On the other hand, Claudio said 90 percent of the local officials, from congressmen to governors and mayors, are allied with the administration.

Offering no apologies, he said the administration will harness this "formidable juggernaut" to propel Team Unity and administration candidates to victory.

He belittled the Pulse Asia survey showing GO candidates leading the survey in Manila.

"Let's bear in mind that the campaign for local candidates has not started. This is when we expect the machinery which includes Lakas, Kampi, NPC (Nationalist People's Coalition), LP (Liberal Party, Atienza wing) and others. This will make a great big difference as far as the momentum of coalition candidates is concerned. We do expect that the emergence of the machinery of the administration will spell the victory of Team Unity," Claudio said.

He clarified that the use of the government machinery did not mean government resources were being used for the campaign of Team Unity.

"We're talking about the clout, influence, power and credibility of mostly incumbent officials supporting the administration," Claudio said.

'Hello Garci' again

He denied that government funds were being used for Team Unity's *pulong-sulong* or small town hall meetings being held in lieu of campaign rallies.

Claudio also said Team Unity was prepared to discuss issues being brought up by the opposition, including the "Hello Garci" scandal wherein President Macapagal-Arroyo was caught on tape talking to Elections Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano in the middle of the canvassing of the 2004 elections.

"We don't have anything to be afraid of. We are used to dealing with the black propaganda of the opposition and we know where the dirty tricks, the muckraking and the insults are coming from," he said. "In the end, members of Team Unity will have no particular discomfort tackling these issues." *With reports from Ma. Diosa Labiste in Visayas and Gil Cabacungan in Manila*

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RYAN LIM

LEVISTE

DOJ seeks dismissal of Leviste's petition

Prosecutor says motion a delaying tactic

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED the Court of Appeals to dismiss the petition of former Batangas Gov. Jose Antonio Leviste questioning the upgrading of the homicide charge against him to murder.

Leviste also sought to stop the murder case from proceeding.

In comments filed with the appellate court, Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco of the Department of Justice said the filing of the petition was only meant to delay Leviste's trial for the killing of his long-time aide Rafael de las Alas.

Velasco said the petition lacked "any factual and legal basis and was filed merely to delay the proceedings of the murder case against the petitioner."

Denied

Leviste initially asked for a temporary restraining order against the reinvestigation of the homicide charge against him but was denied.

He later asked the appellate court to review the prosecutor's decision to charge him with murder, saying it was based on surmises and conjectures.

Leviste also questioned the speed—less than two days—in the issuance of the resolution upgrading the charge against him.

The former governor, who invoked self-defense in the incident, was rushed to the Makati Medical Center last week after falling ill while detained at the Makati City Jail.

The state prosecutor denounced the alleged special treatment given to Leviste as shown in his hospital confinement. Velasco had said he did not believe Leviste was sick. Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez seemed to agree.

Victim

In his comment on Leviste's petition, Velasco told the court De las Alas was the victim in the incident, and not the former governor.

Velasco pointed out that after the shooting incident at the LPL Towers in Makati, Leviste was rushed to the hospital while De las Alas was left in the office, bleeding. He added that Leviste refused to undergo a paraffin test, while De las Alas' body was tested.

"If anyone had been denied his right to due process, it was De las Alas and not the petitioner," Velasco said.

Impartiality

The prosecutor also pointed out that Leviste questioned Judge Elmo Alameda impartiality and asked him to inhibit himself from presiding over the murder case.

As a result, Leviste's arraignment was deferred. The Makati court also postponed the arraignment out of courtesy to the appellate court since the supplemental petition was pending before it.

However, the prosecutor added, Leviste also filed a motion with the Makati court asking to be allowed to post bail.

Velasco said the application for bail was tantamount to abandonment of Leviste's petition before the appellate court.

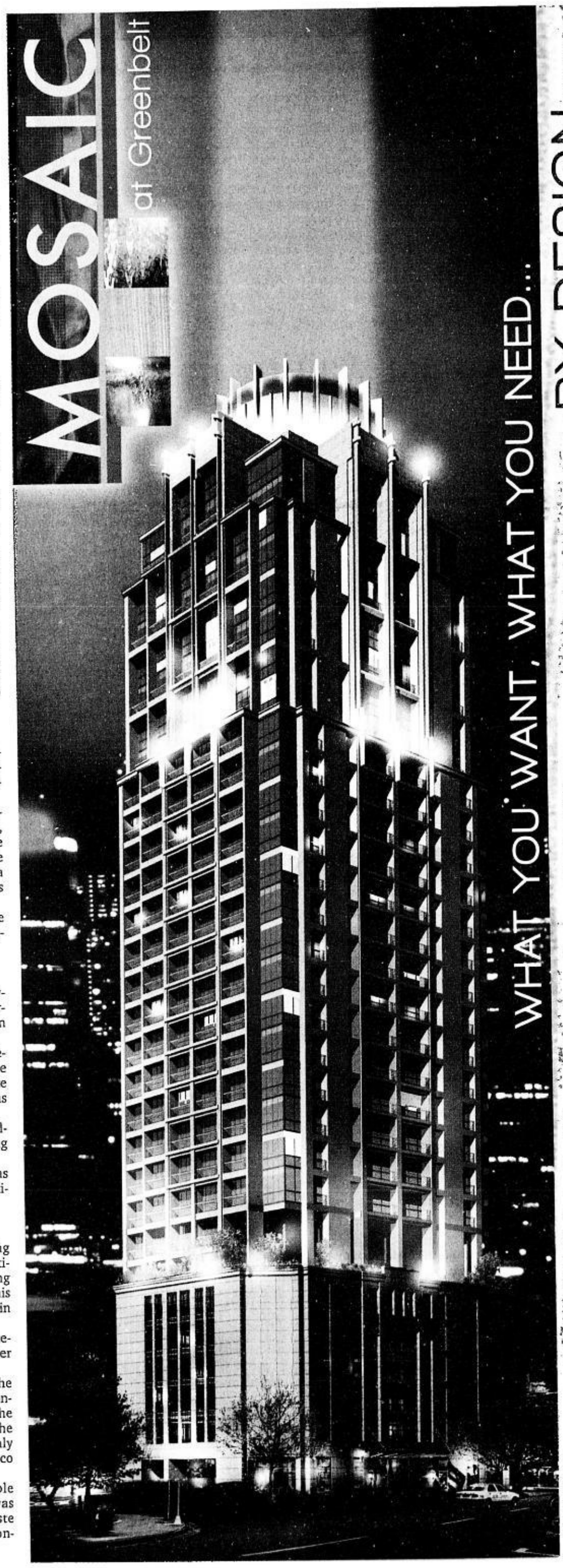
Defense

The prosecutor also defended his issuing within two days a resolution for the reinvestigation of the former governor's case saying Leviste waived his right to present his counter-affidavit by refusing to participate in the reinvestigation.

Velasco said the rules of criminal procedures authorized him to resolve the case after Leviste's refusal to participate.

"Clearly, what petitioner wanted if he could have his way were for herein respondent to dilly dally in the resolution of the case or, even worse, to sleep on the case so he (petitioner) could remain scot-free with only a homicide case filed against him," Velasco said.

He denied that his finding of probable cause to charge Leviste with murder was based on conjectures. He said Leviste failed to present proof to back up this contention.



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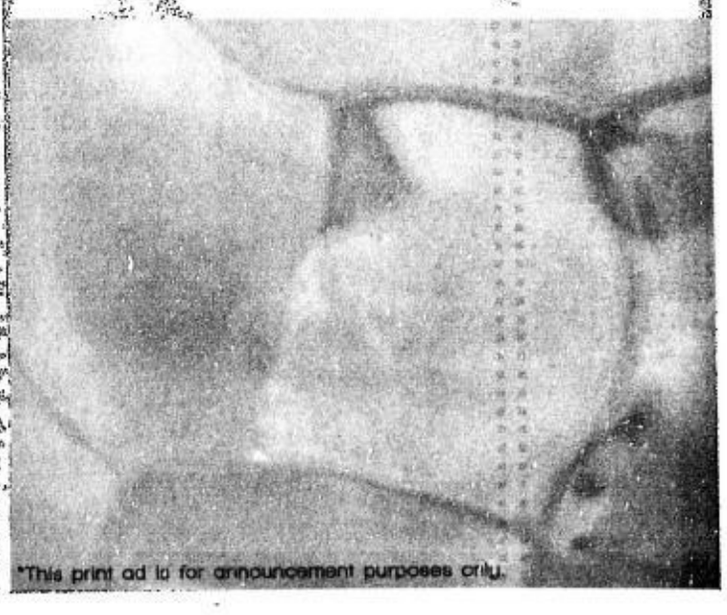

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Seniors office employees want Calixto 'out'

By Julie M. Aurelio

EMPLOYEES OF PASAY CITY'S Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (Osca) are protesting their "removal from office," literally.

The Osca staff complained yesterday that their space was "occupied" by dismissed vice mayor Antonino Calixto, adding that the former city executive should respect the elderly.

Calixto has been holding office at the Osca, located in the Pasay City Sports Complex, for nearly five days now. Some Osca employees have moved temporarily to the Social Welfare and Development office at City Hall to conduct their business.

"They don't respect us anymore. This is our office and they have no right to prevent us from entering the Osca," said the office's head Lourdes Patio.

The group wrote to Mayor Alan Panaligan to complain about the continued stay in their office of the dismissed vice mayor and his supporters.

More than a hundred of Calixto's followers keep him company at the Osca as he seeks to regain his old post.

Two tents bearing the names and photos of Calixto and dismissed mayor Wenceslao Trinidad have been set up near the office entrance.

Patio said they could not attend to the needs of senior citizens because they were prevented from entering the office.

The Osca staff members also alleged that some of Calixto's supporters shouted at them when they tried to enter their office.

Meanwhile, Trinidad came to his vice mayor's defense and took to task Undersecretary Wencelito Andanar of the Department of Interior and Local Government for not following the court's orders.

"He's just supposed to implement the temporary restraining order (issued last Feb. 22)," Trinidad said in a phone interview yesterday.

"He has no business questioning and not obeying the TRO," he added.

Trinidad called on presidential legal counsel Sergio Apostol to tell Andanar to implement the Court of Appeals order.

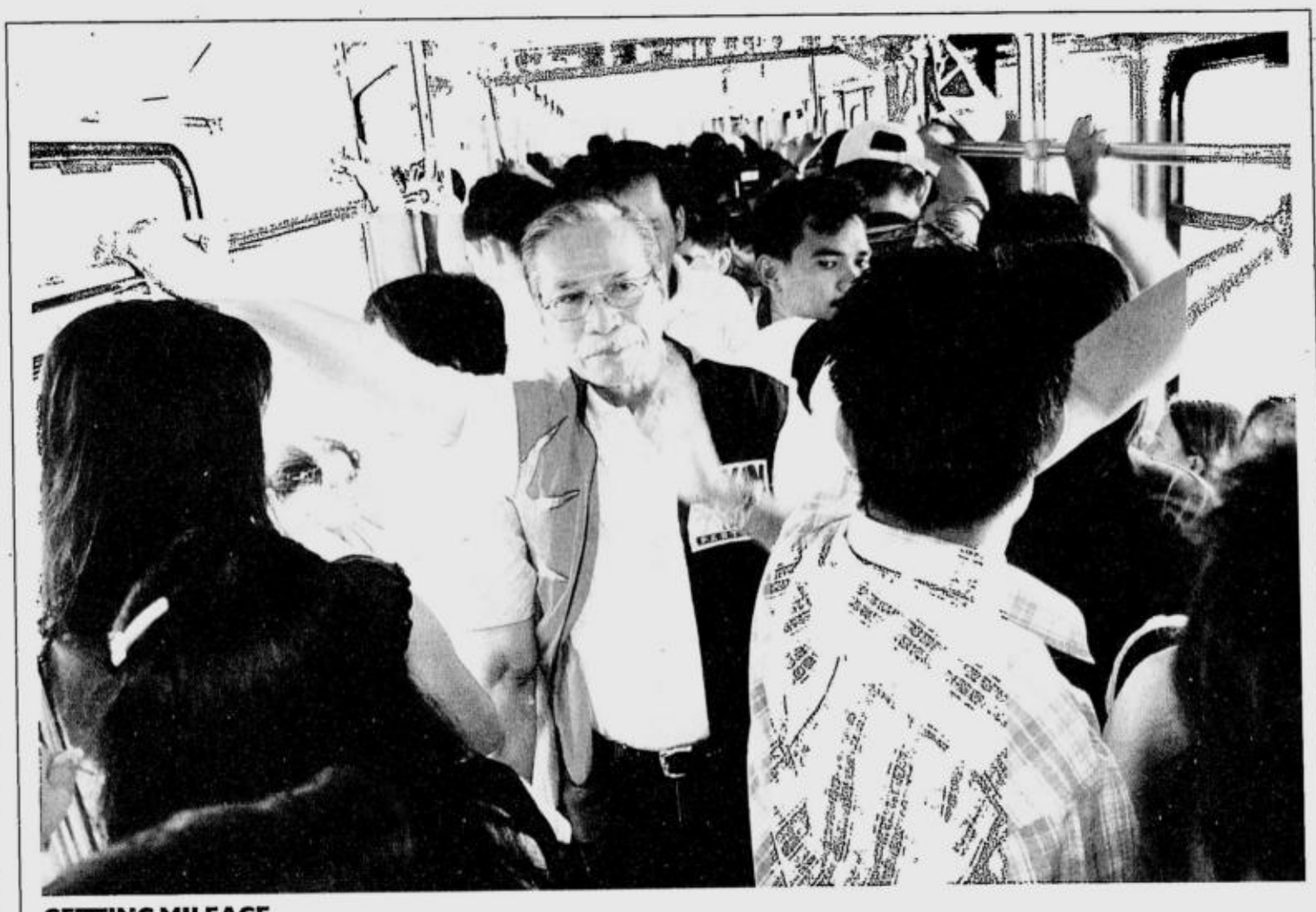
Earlier, Apostol said Calixto was within his rights to ask the CA to cite for contempt those who refused to recognize the court order.

"I think Apostol should tell Andanar to just follow orders. The underlings are the ones who are not obeying the rule of law and are embarrassing the national government," Trinidad added.

Last week, the Court of Appeals issued a 60-day TRO against the implementation of the dismissal order against Calixto. Since then, the former vice mayor has tried twice to enter City Hall and occupy his old post but was rebuffed by the local police.

On Monday, Andanar sent Calixto a letter informing him that the status quo should be observed. He also said Panaligan and Tolentino should stay in their posts.

The DILG had filed a manifestation before the CA asking the court to clarify the TRO it issued in favor of the dismissed vice mayor.



GETTING MILEAGE
Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo taps the support of thousands of commuters taking the LRT in a campaign sortie last week.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

METROBRIEFS

A question of timing

MANILA Rep. Rodolfo "Rudy" Bacani questioned yesterday the timing of a case filed against him by the Commission on Elections (Comelec) for an alleged election violation committed three years ago. Bacani, a third-term congressman of Manila's fourth district, had already announced his plan to run for mayor this May. Along with Manuel Bagatsing, Bacani was accused of "premature campaigning" for failing to remove their holiday posters and billboards within the prescribed period. Bacani and Bagatsing ran for the same congressional post in 2004. "I'm already on my last few months in my tenure as congressman, " the congressman said. "The timing is very unfortunate, because as far as I know, I have not violated any election offense." Bagatsing and Bacani would be charged with violating the Omnibus Election Code, the Fair Election Act, and Comelec Resolution No. 6520.

Allison W. Lopez

Bridges under repair

FOUR bridges in Metro Manila will undergo repair this year after a Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) inspection team found that the steel portions of these bridges were already corroded. Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan said that apart from the Ayala Bridge in Manila and the Tullahan Bridge in Valenzuela City, both of which are already undergoing repair, the Jones Bridge in Manila and the Guadalupe Bridge in Makati City will also undergo rehabilitation right after the elections. "We already have the funds for all the four projects," Bonoan told the INQUIRER. Repair work on the northbound lane of the Ayala Bridge is expected to be completed in three weeks, while improvements on the southbound lane will be completed in April, the DPWH also said in a statement.
Bonoan said the repair of the Tullahan Bridge on the busy MacArthur Highway, connecting the cities of Malabon and Valenzuela, would be completed within the year. The bridge is expected to be closed anytime this month to give way to the rehabilitation project. The rehabilitation of the bridges would also include increasing the bridge clearances to six meters to address the rising water level of the Pasig River because of heavy siltation, the DPWH added.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

San Juan, Navotas: Waiting in the wings for cityhood

By Santiago R. Alcantara and Nancy C. Carvajal

THE TOWNS OF SAN JUAN AND Navotas are only a signature and a plebiscite away from cityhood. But will they make it in time before the May elections?

If San Juan becomes a city this year, that would be perfect timing since it would coincide with the marking of its centennial, says Mayor JV Ejercito.

The bill that would transform the town into a city has been sent to Malacañang for President Macapagal-Arroyo's signature. It will lapse on March 8 and automatically becomes a law whether or not the President signs it, according to the mayor.

The perceived delay in the signing of the bill could be due to the fact that Ejercito, just like Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco, is with the Opposition, according to residents of both towns.

Ejercito said 30 days after March 8, the new law would be presented for ratification by San Juan residents. If approved, the town will become a city.

"The plebiscite will go on whether or not there will be elections on May 14. *Hindi puwedeng walang* time *para dito*," the mayor said.

San Juan has an annual income of P493 million plus an infrastructure revenue allotment (IRA) of P57 million, for a total of P550.9 million. "San Juan's income-generating power has increased tremendously as shown in the Greenhills area alone. The municipality of San Juan is not IRA-dependent."

In 2000, the National Statistics Office recorded the population of San Juan to be 117,680, not counting some 11,309 residents of 6,283 condominiums. It has a total land area of 5.94 sq km.

Tiangco, on the other hand, told a weekly forum in Caloocan City yesterday that he had asked the Commission on Elections to allow the holding of a plebiscite before the official campaign period for local posts begin.

The mayor, who is seeking another term, said Navotas has already fulfilled the requirements of cityhood in terms of land area, population, and income.

He said he wrote Comelec in anticipation of the signing by President Arroyo of House Bill No. 5500 converting Navotas into a city. The bill was passed by both the Congress and Senate on Feb. 6.

If the President signs the bill next week, a plebiscite should be immediately conducted after the 15-day publication requirement. This should be between March 13 and April 12, Tiangco added.

He said it was important for Navotas to elect its own representative in May so as not to be deprived of its Community Development Fund for three years. Without a representative, Navotas would stand to lose the P210 million CDF over the three-year period that could help his constituents, Tiangco added.

The mayor scored Rep. Ricky Sandoval, author of the bill, for allegedly delaying Navotas' cityhood for political reasons.

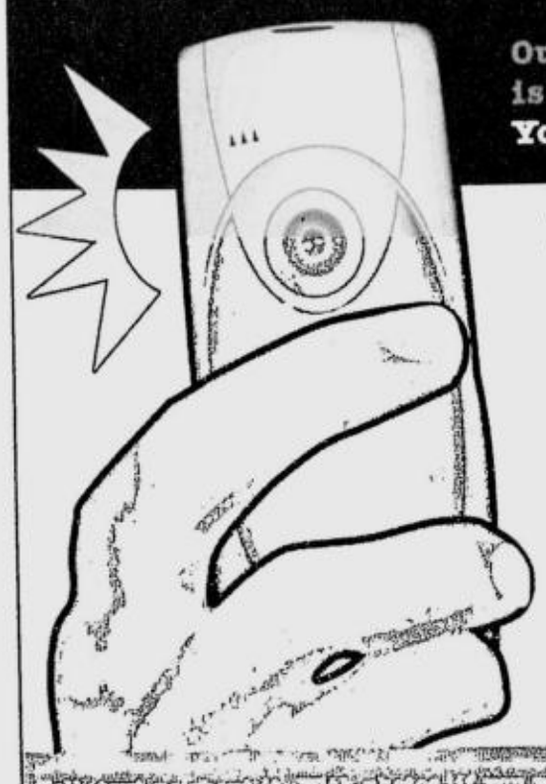
Sandoval, who is on his third and final term as congressman, earlier told the INQUIRER that he would run against Tiangco in May. He reportedly wanted to add an amendment that Tiangco said, "would only benefit him and not the people of Navotas."

The amendment would let the congressman represent the new city until a new representative is elected following the ratification of Navotas' cityhood.

At the forum, Tiangco also presented his ticket, including Vice-Mayor PJ Javier and councilors.

METRO

Citizen's Call



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INQUIRER

An unusual bigamy case

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

AN OFFICIAL OF THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS has been charged in the Department of Justice with bigamy.

Bigamy is a crime where the accused contracted a second marriage while the first marriage was still existing.

It is usually the men who are charged with bigamy in this country. It is the nature of menfolk, especially in this country where machismo is admired, to have two or more partners.

But in the bigamy case against the customs official, the accused is a woman. The complainant is her husband, a minor customs functionary.

The accused customs official, according to my sources, is now having a relationship with a retired general in addition to her second husband.

* * *

Jamalul Kiram, an administration senatorial candidate, is probably one of the very few well-to-do Muslim men who has only one wife. Under Muslim law, a man can have as many as four wives.

Kiram's "one and only" wife happens to be a Christian, which is probably why he can't get a second, third or fourth mate out of his great love for her.

* * *

Arturo Filoteo, 94, retired government employee, has not been getting his pension from the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) since November 2006.

When he tries to use the Union Bank automated teller machine (ATM), he is unable to get funds. The ATM tells him there is no money in the GSIS account.

When Filoteo goes to the GSIS, he is told that his money is already in the Union Bank.

The old man has been doing the Union Bank/GSIS "rigodon" for four months now.

I have heard many reports similar to this poor old retiree's predicament. Where is the money of the government pensioners going to? Has it been spent for some other purpose?

An audit is definitely appropriate. My lawyer friends tell me that this might be a case of syndicated estafa or economic sabotage.

* * *

An item about the Air Materiel Wing Savings and Loan Association (AMWSLAI) got a rejoinder from retired Air Force Col. Ricardo L. Nolasco Jr., AMWSLAI chair and president.

His letter reads in part:

"It was after the elections in 2005 when the new Board of Trustees (BOT) took over that the association came up with a Business Improvement and Good Governance Plan geared towards putting our association back in order, which was left in disarray by the former members of the BOT.

"The information given to you by your source that the BOT has granted huge dividends to its members and to its officers is highly inaccurate and misleading. Our association is a non-stock and non-profit corporation. As such, it is obligated to distribute dividends to its members from whatever income is realized by the association and is pro-rated based on their respective capital contributions.

"Our records do not show any member of the current BOT approving a huge loan in favor of a relative. What our records and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) audit reports indicate is that several former members of the BOT granted huge loans to themselves and their immediate relatives. These are now [the] subject of collection cases filed by the current board."

* * *

Why didn't the lady judge, who is hearing the libel case filed by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo against Malaya publisher and columnist Jake Macasaet, cite him for contempt when he challenged the defendant's lawyer to a fist fight?

The answer is simple: The judge was awestruck by Mr. Arroyo's presence in her court.

Partnership offers cheap pill to treat malaria

A NEW, CHEAP, PILL TO TREAT malaria is being introduced Thursday, the first product of an innovative partnership between an international drug company and a medical charity.

The medicine, called ASAQ, is a pill combining artemisinin, invented in China using sweet wormwood and hailed as a miracle malaria drug, with amodiaquine, an older drug that still works in many malarial areas.

A treatment will cost less than $1 for adults and less than 50 cents for children. Adults with malaria will take only two pills a day for three days, and the pill will come in three smaller once-a-day sizes for infants, toddlers and youngsters.

In Africa, malaria kills 3,000 infants and children each day, but combination drugs like this are not available for children of less than 11 lbs, and they require taking a larger number of pills each day, as many as 24 for some adult versions.

"This is a good thing," said Dr. Arata Kochi, chief of the World Health Organization's global malaria program, who has publicly demanded that drug companies stop making pills that contain artemisinin alone because they will lead to resistant strains of malaria. "They're responding to the kind of drug profile we've been promoting."

Sanofi-Aventis, the world's fourth-largest drug company, based in Paris, will sell the pill at cost to international health agencies like the World Health Organization, Unicef and the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The roll-out of the drug is the result of a two-year partnership between Sanofi and the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative, a campaign started by the medical charity Medecins Sans Frontieres to find new drugs for tropical diseases.

Medecins Sans Frontieres—known in English as Doctors Without Borders—has long been one of the harshest critics of the pharmaceutical industry, charging that it spent billions on drugs like Viagra, Ambien and Prozac for rich countries and almost nothing on diseases killing millions of poor people.

But, recognizing that new drugs would have to come from the industry's major players, Medecins Sans Frontieres founded the initiative in 2003 and began seeking partnerships. This is the first to come to fruition.

"This was not a love wedding, it was a reasonable wedding," said Dr. Robert Sebbag, Sanofi's vice president for access to medicines. "But reasonableness is often more important for a long marriage. They've seen we are not nasty people working against poor countries and seeking only profits."

In an unusual move, Sanofi has decided not to seek any patents so the pills can be freely copied by generic companies like those in India. The drugs themselves are too old to patent, but the one-pill formulation could have been. *NYT*

Pakistan seizes top Taliban

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN—THE former Taliban defense minister was arrested in Pakistan on Monday, the day of US Vice President Dick Cheney's visit, two government officials said Thursday. He is the most important Taliban member to be captured since the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

The man, Mullah Obaidullah, was a senior leader of the Afghan insurgency, which has battled US and Nato forces with increasing intensity over the last year.

He is one of the inner core around Mullah Muhammad Omar, the Taliban leader. The leadership is believed to operate from the relative safety of Quetta, Pakistan, where Obaidullah was arrested.

It was not clear whether he was picked up before, during or after Cheney's visit. But the timing may be significant because Cheney's mission was intended to press Pakistan to do more to crack down on members of the Taliban and al-Qaida who use Pakistan as a sanctuary.

Pakistan has come under rising criticism from US and Nato officials for acting against the Taliban and al-Qaida only under pressure, conducting operations or making arrests timed for high-level official visits, then backing off. *NYT*

DEBRIS from a roof blown off at the Hawthorn Suites is scattered in front of a hotel after a twister moved through the area, March 1, in Columbus, Ga. AP

Tornado wrecks US school, killing 17

BIRMINGHAM, ALA.,—TORNADOES ripped across the Southern and Midwestern United States on Thursday and killed at least 19 people, most of whom had been taking shelter in a high school that collapsed in southern Alabama.

Seventeen people died in the southern Alabama town of Enterprise, where the school building was torn open by the twister, state Emergency Management Agency spokesperson Yasmie Richardson told the Montgomery Advertiser newspaper.

Gov. Bob Riley, who declared a state of emergency and sent 100 National Guard troops to the town, said there was at least one more death elsewhere in Alabama and rescue workers were still moving debris to search for survivors as night fell.

Another death was reported in Missouri.

Television news footage showed helicopters landing on the football field near wreckage of the school in Enterprise while ambulances came and went. The shredded building was surrounded by broken trees and overturned cars.

Emergency officials told local television that at least one teacher was among those killed at the school. CNN quoted an eyewitness as saying he carried the bodies of two young girls out of the building.

"Enterprise has suffered major and widespread damage," Riley said. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

13 charged in 'pervasive' Wall Street insider trading

NEW YORK—Thirteen people were accused Thursday of participating in a major insider trading ring, including a Morgan Stanley compliance official, a UBS research executive and traders for hedge funds and brokerage firms. Nine of the defendants have been arrested, and four have pleaded guilty to charges ranging from securities fraud, conspiracy to commit securities fraud and bribery. Linda C. Thomsen, chief of enforcement at the Securities and Exchange Commission, called the scheme one of the most "pervasive Wall Street insider trading rings since the days of Ivan Boesky and Dennis Levine." The SEC accused the suspects of making illicit profits totaling more than $15 million, while the federal criminal charges cite illicit profits of $8 million from 13 individuals. *NYT*

2 paintings by Picasso stolen in Paris

PARIS—Two important paintings by Picasso estimated by the police to be worth a total of about $66 million have been stolen from the Left Bank home of his granddaughter Diana Widmaier-Picasso, the authorities announced Wednesday. Paris police officials said the two oils, "Maya With Doll" from 1938 and "Portrait of Jacqueline" from 1961, were taken from Widmaier-Picasso's house on the Rue de Grenelle in the city's chic Seventh Arrondissement sometime overnight between Monday and Tuesday. *NYT*

Afghan opium output soars–US

WASHINGTON—Opium production in Afghanistan surged to record levels in 2006, increasing the flow of heroin to Europe and the Middle East and undermining the fight against Islamist insurgents, the US reported Thursday. In its annual report on global narcotics, the state department linked a 25-percent jump in opium production in Afghanistan during 2006 to the resurgence of the Taliban militia, which has reasserted control over swathes of the country from which they were ousted in 2001. *AFP*

SOUTH Korea's new main battle tank, XK2, is seen during its unveiling ceremony southeast of Seoul, March 2. S. Korea claims the tank, which costs $8.8 million each, is the world's best. AFP

S. Korea unveils tank that can go under water

SEOUL—SOUTH KOREA ON FRIDAY unveiled what it calls the world's best tank, capable of fording shallow rivers, defending itself against missiles and firing "smart" projectiles.

The XK2 Black Panther is a main battle tank of "the highest technical level all over the world," said its developer, the state-run Agency for Defense Development.

Key features include an active defense system against incoming missiles and aircraft, automatic tracking and ammunition loading systems, an active suspension unit and high underwater maneuverability.

"We have stolen a march over other developed countries in developing ground weaponry. The Black Panther proves it," agency president Ahn Dong-Mahn told journalists.

Kim Eui-Hwan, the official in charge of the project, said the Black Panther has "more superb capabilities than any other existing tank."

Its armament includes a 120-mm smooth bore main gun which is automatically loaded and capable of firing up to 15 rounds per minute.

A unique system enables it to fire on the move and compensates for errors caused by bumpy terrain.

A special suspension unit enables the tank to "sit," "stand" and "kneel," allowing it to fire its main gun downhill.

Another key feature is Korean Smart Top-attack Munition rounds, which have their own guidance and obstacle-avoidance systems to hit hidden targets.

In another claimed world first, the agency said the tank—using a special snorkel—can maneuver quickly in up to 4.1 meters of water and is ready for combat immediately after it surfaces.

With three crew on board, the 55-ton tank with a 1,500 horsepower engine has a road speed of more than 70 km per hour and cross-country speed of more than 50 kph.

The Black Panther will enter mass production in three years and the army will take delivery of an unknown number in 2011. The price tag is estimated at $8.8 million each and developers will also seek export orders.

The tank has been developed by researchers at ADD and Rotem, a unit of Hyundai Motor, along with defense industry firms.

South Korea's 680,000-strong military, assisted by a 29,500-strong US contingent, faces off against North Korea's 1.1 million-strong armed forces. *AFP*

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Caloocan, Las Piñas, San Juan, Taguig

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2007

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

THE BODY AS CANVAS
An artist applies final touches on a model during a body-painting contest at the "Beauty days" fair in Bucharest March 1. REUTERS

Progress on new Iran sanctions

WASHINGTON—MAJOR POWERS ON THURSDAY MADE progress toward agreeing on new sanctions on Iran for its nuclear program and hope to have their UN ambassadors begin drafting a formal Security Council resolution next week, a senior US official said.

The official told Reuters senior officials representing the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany "were able to resolve most of the issues" in a two-hour conference call on Thursday and hoped to complete their deliberations in another conference call on Saturday.

Washington and leading European countries say they suspect Iran has a covert nuclear bomb agenda. Tehran denies the charge and says its nuclear program is solely aimed at generating electricity.

The first sanctions resolution seeking suspension of Iran's uranium enrichment program was approved by the Security Council in December. It took the United States and its partners several months of bitter wrangling to pass the resolution and the Americans, at least, are keen to avoid that kind of division this time.

But despite the Security Council's unified commitment to dissuade Iran from pursuing uranium enrichment, Russia and China have often had serious objections to specific penalties.

"They are working on the guts of a resolution ... They were able to resolve most issues (but) they still have a few left so they will get together Saturday morning via telephone," said the US official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"The hope and expectation is that they can then move this over to permanent representatives in New York who can start drafting the actual test of the resolution," he added.

Earlier, however, a European Union diplomat said, "A wish list of incrementally increased sanctions has been circulated but the discussion is nowhere near mature and this will not go to the Security Council for 2-3 more weeks." In Madrid, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said his government wants a negotiated solution to its nuclear standoff with world powers but this must recognize an Iranian right to a peaceful nuclear program. *Reuters*

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WARM LONDON
Daffodils blossom in Parliament Square in London March 1. Britain has just recorded its second warmest winter in 30 years with the average temperature at 5.47 degrees Celsius. REUTERS

Non-citizens in US want right to vote

NEW YORK—NON-CITIZENS ARE ASKING for the right to vote in New York City local elections—a right that would affect about 1.3 million legal adult residents in this famously immigrant-heavy city.

With more than 60 community groups publicly behind them, the non-citizen immigrants say they pay the same taxes, use the same services and want the same say in how the city is run.

"I care, and I would have thought that's what this country wants and needs," said Anja Rudiger, a permanent resident from Germany who moved to New York last summer. The proposal is restricted to legal residents of more than six months.

But the proposal, now before a City Council committee, touches a raw nerve in a country already debating what to do about the huge wave of recent immigrants.

"Has this city gone nuts?" one resident wrote to the New York Post, echoing similar letters to the newspaper. "If you don't like it here, go home or become a citizen."

The proposal has the support of just under a third of the City Council members. Mayor Michael Bloomberg opposes the measure.

"Until you're a citizen, I don't think you should vote," Bloomberg said last week.

But some non-citizens in the United States are already voting, taking advantage of a mostly forgotten tradition. Six communities in Maryland allow non-citizens to vote in local elections. In Chicago, non-citizens can vote in school board races. And in Massachusetts, three cities have approved non-citizen voting at the local level, including the city of Newton, which approved it last week. That move still needs the state Legislature's approval.

In St. Paul, Minnesota, a prominent political group is proposing to let non-citizens vote in city elections, though the state constitution requires voters to be citizens.

In a country where the wait for citizenship can last up to a decade, legal residents of the US should have this right, supporters argue.

"We're in the midst of the largest migration of human beings in history," said Ron Hayduk, a political science professor and author of the 2006 book "Democracy for All: Restoring Immigrant Voting Rights in the United States." "Who is a real American? What is America becoming?"

Other countries around the world are facing similar questions. At least 24 nations let non-citizens vote at some level. European Union members allow resident aliens from other EU countries to vote in local elections. New Zealand lets any resident of a year or more vote in local and even national elections. Chile and Uruguay also allow non-citizen voting at the national level.

Councilman Charles Barron, the sponsor of the Voting Rights Restoration Act in the New York City Council, said that years ago, when immigrants were mostly European, they had voting rights. *AP*

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SPORTS

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Online poll: 9 of 10 want Pacquiao out of politics

By Roy Luarca

IT'S CRYSTAL-CLEAR. FANS want Manny Pacquiao to fight in the ring, not in the political arena.

Voting online, more than 91 percent of 15,305 respondents, as of 6 p.m. yesterday, said they do not want Pacquiao to pursue his bid for a congressional seat in South Cotabato.

Only four out of every one hundred (4.0 percent) agreed with the 2006 Fighter of the Year's decision to pursue a strange calling while 4.7 percent said they do not care.

The question posted on the mannypacquiao.ph website was: "Are you in favor of Manny Pacquiao entering politics?"

It was posted shortly after Pacquiao announced that he intends to challenge incumbent Darlene Antonino-Custodio for the congressional seat in South Cotabato's first district.

Although Pacquiao has said he is focusing on his fight against the unbeaten Jorge Solis of Mexico for the WBC international super featherweight title on April 14, his associates have been insinuated that he is bent on running.

This, despite the boos that Pacquaio reportedly drew from boxing fans when he watched the Battle of Cebu: "Moment of Truth" fight card in Cebu City Saturday night.

Lawyer Franklin Gacal Jr., one of Pacquiao's confidantes, bared that Pacquiao has not totally turned his back on seeking a congressional seat in the May 14 polls. The Comelec deadline for the filing of candidacy is on March 29.

"He (Pacquiao) has not closed his doors (on politics)," Gacal said. "He is focused on his upcoming fight right now and he doesn't want (his election plans) to distract him."

Gacal said Pacquiao's decision will likely hinge on the outcome of his bout with Solis.

Pacquiao is scheduled to leave for Los Angeles on Monday to continue his preparations against Solis, 27, who boasts 32 wins, 23 by knockout.

Before that, he he flies from General Santos City to Manila today as the promoter of tonight's big "Rambol at the Bay" at the Rajah Sulaiman Park along Roxas Boulevard. *with reports from Salven Lagumbay, Contributor*

PACQUIAO: Still undecided whether he will join the political fray or not in South Cotabato.

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CHEVROLET WE'LL BE THERE.

Palarong Pambansa athletes face stricter screening

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ORGANIZERS OF PALARONG PAMBANSA, the annual athletic talent search tainted by age-cheating last year, yesterday vowed to clean up house by imposing new guidelines to weed out ineligibles from this year's games in South Cotabato.

National coordinator Len Toledo bared several safety nets when the sports meet kicks off April 22-28 in Koronadal City.

"We hope that we have covered everything this year," Toledo told the INQUIRER.

Among the documents the athlete-students will now be asked to present are the Form 137 duly signed by school officials, medical certificates from the province, athletes record approved by the school coach and birth certificate authenticated by the National Statistics Office.

These documents should also have the signatures of the parents, adviser, coach, principal and district superintendent, something that wasn't required in the past.

This was spurred by the controversy that raged during the 2006 Palaro in Naga City, where at least 11 officials were suspended after being found guilty of doctoring their wards' birth records. Toledo said a few of the guilty parties are now facing administrative charges.

He added that they have conducted nationwide seminars for officials who will conduct the monitoring of athletes.

"We taught them how to interpret documents and implement the guidelines," added Toledo.

Approximately 8,000 athletes and coaches are expected to gather in Mindanao for this year's Palaro. Each of the 17 regions have already signified their intention to take part.

The organizers have also conducted inspection of the playing venues and billeting areas, said Toledo of the city which also hosted the event in 1997.

He reported that the playing venues are ready for the Games, while the billeting areas only need few repairs.

Frankie comes to grief, misses JW Classic cut

By Jong Arcano
Inquirer Golf Monthly editor

PHUKET, THAILAND—FRANKIE MIÑOZA'S streak of good fortune finally came to an end when he missed the cut yesterday in the Johnnie Walker Classic at the water-laced Blue Canyon Country Club here.

Playing in his sixth consecutive tournament, the 47-year-old Philippine Open champion picked up two early bogeys and failed to recover, missing at least three makeable birdies along the way. He carded an even-par 72 for a 145 total—three strokes below the halfway cut.

The current Order of Merit leader of the Asian Tour failed to make it to the weekend action for the first time since the UBS Hong Kong Open in mid-November last year. It was a fruitful three-month stretch where he crowned himself the RP Open champ again at Wack Wack and placed second in the Indonesian Open.

Angelo Que also failed to sustain the momentum of his superb first-round effort of 69 as he soared to a 75 and packed his bags early as well.

Miñoza went 19 under par and scattered 70 birdies in his first four events in 2007, not counting last week's Razon Cup Invitational, and banked more than P10 million in prize money.

He can only look back to the fourth and fifth holes for his disastrous stint here. He lost five strokes to the two tricky par-4s in two days, going bogey-double bogey in the first round and bogey-bogey yesterday.

"A tired body deserves a rest," said Miñoza in jest, adding he will take a brief vacation.

"The brain is not tired but the body is," he told reporters. "I was still hitting the ball well, I just failed to sink some short putts."

Trying to stage a rally in the back nine, Miñoza gave himself chances but muffed birdie putts on the par-5s, 11th and the 15th, and the 17th.

The tough conditions in the afternoon proved too much for Que, who only last Sunday took the P1.3 million champion's prize in the Razon Cup.

OUT OF SYNC: Frankie Miñoza hits his tee shot on the 18th. GETTY IMAGES

Mourning Murakami nails first win as pro

By Musong R. Castillo

ARTEMIO MURAKAMI WAS RAZOR-SHARP despite a heavy heart, shooting a two-under-par 70 yesterday to run away with the Omega Cup, a 36-hole celebrity event which will still go down as his first victory as a professional.

Just a week after losing his half brother to liver cancer, Murakami shot down four birdies against two bogeys for a two-day total of 138 at Wack Wack's tough East layout.

The win was worth P120,000 for the 23-year-old Murakami, who won the RP Amateurs as a 15-year-old in 1999 and turned pro just over a year ago.

His total was six-under-par, four shots clear of darkhorse Ruben Sasutil, who teed off just a stroke behind but floundered with a 73 for solo second.

Gerald Rosales, who also started the day just a shot back, struggled to a 75 and finished in a tie for fifth spot with Juvic Pagunsan, the Asian Tour Rookie of the Year. Both finished with 145 tallies.

Senior campaigner Rey Alit turned in a level 72 for a share of third spot with Jherome Delariarte (71) for 143 totals. They each won P43,000.

Also on tap in the event are best-ball team play composed of one pro, one celebrity and two VIPs, plus the individual competition in Classes A, B, C and D and the celebrity division.

Rey Pagunsan scored even-par 72 and placed seventh with a 146 worth P20,000 while Richard Sinfuego made a 73 for eighth place at 147. He won P18,000.

Mario Manubay and Cassius Casas shared ninth place at 148 with the former scoring a 74 and the latter rallying with a 71. They shared the combined P30,000 prize staked in the tournament organized by Len Plus, Inc. headed by Marilen Nuñez.

POC prepares appeal for four SEAG events

By June Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE is seeking the inclusion of four more sports in the Southeast Asian Games where the country has a good chance of winning gold medals.

A source in the SEAG Task Force said the Olympic body would appeal for the inclusion of chess, bodybuilding, soft tennis and arnis in the roster of events for the 24th edition of the biennial meet to be held in Thailand later this year.

The four events along with squash and net ball were scrapped during the meeting of the SEAG Federation in Pattaya last September.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco has appointed POC secretary-general Steve Hontiveros to represent the Philippines when the SEAG Federation convenes again in April to finalize the sports to be disputed this year.

Cojuangco said Hontiveros would act in behalf of the chef de mission, who has yet to be named by the POC.

Sources said the POC and PSC are trying to convince First Gentleman Mike Arroyo to take the job.

The Philippines, which hosted the Games in 2005, will defend its first-ever overall SEAG crown in Thailand.

"I will coordinate with the (SEAG) Task Force on which sport should be included in the SEA Games before the federation meeting," said Hontiveros.

Chess and arnis, where Team Philippines is strong, were reportedly dropped because the Thais are weak in both events.

The Thais have calendared 40 sports with 441 events in the coming SEAG. In the last edition, 39 sports were played consisting of 439 events.

The POC will also lobby for additional events in wushu, traditional boat race and shooting. Wushu events were reduced to 12 from as many as 22 in 2005 while traditional boat race will only have two events from six during the Manila SEAG.

Standing tall at 5-foot-2, 116 pounds

By Percy D. Della

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA—POUND FOR pound, Manny Pacquiao is NOT the most remarkable Filipino professional athlete today.

Quite possibly, this 5-foot-2, 116-lb wonder is.

Ramon Guce is a wisp of a man—yet he is a jockey who must summon all the guts and determination to steer speedy, high-strung horses weighing half a ton for a living.

One thing separates jockeys like Ramon from other sports pros. They have to win, place or show to get paid.

Jockeys don't have guaranteed contracts worth millions to sign.

To paraphrase Sir John Houseman's words in the classic Smith Barney commercials of the 1980s: "They make money the old-fashioned way. They earn it."

Mr. Guce, however, is no grouch.

"I don't have Pacquiao's millions but I am cool," he told me in Filipino by phone from his home near Los Angeles the other day. "I am earning decent dough."

Last year, Ramon's horses earned $399,000 in prize money. Purse percentages from the thoroughbreds and American quarter horses he rides to first, second and third places are flowing his way. A riding fee of $50 or more each for hundreds of mounts year-round make him a happy camper.

The proof of the pudding is in a couple of cars and a house in Artesia, near Los Alamitos Racetrack—"ground zero" for his further rise as a jockey in America.

Ramon remains the intrepid rider called "Kamikaze" at Los Al, a stone's throw from the "Happiest Place on Earth," Disneyland in Anaheim, California.

He came back from serious back injury last year to emerge the track's thoroughbred riding king with 69 wins. By his account, 30 or so of those victories came near the end of the racing season. He also won the same title in 2001 and 2002.

Although his style is suited for longer races, Guce is coming up to form in quarter horse racing as well.

COMMENTARY

Quarter horses are the dragsters of the Sport of Kings—they are the world's fastest horses trained for races ranging from 870 to 220 yards.

Needless to say, Ramon has emerged as the favorite of Bayang Karerista, American edition. Because he wins aboard longshots with impunity, he has endeared himself to railbirds of all stripes.

But his most avid fans are the Filipino *kareristas* at Los Al and off-track betting facilities nationwide.

Ramon's ritual in the winner's circle has also become his bettors' ritual—a gaze heavenward followed by the sign of the cross.

Ramon came to ride in Los Al from Manila's Santa Ana Park in 1999 and has since overshadowed cousin Jesus and his past glories.

Jesus rode a few mounts at Hollywood Park in LA more than 20 years ago, but went back home abruptly, his American dream unfulfilled.

Agent Neil Bricks gets Ramon good mounts. The Filipino rider gets first crack at horses trained by legendary California horseman Charles Treece.

"He is a true professional," says Treece in the Los Al website of Guce's work ethic. "I love the fact that he puts in a 100 percent effort in riding thoroughbreds, quarter horses and Arabians."

"That kid is all-heart," says Bricks of Ramon, who is on hiatus from racing because of an ankle injury. "I expect him to return with a flourish in four to six weeks," Bricks informed this writer.

Guce picks up occasional rides at Hollywood Park and Santa Anita Park. His wife Marie and their three kids are wishing for him to become a member of the illustrious jockey colony in these venues someday.

At Hollywood Park, his fondest memory is beating jockey legend Laffit Pincay Jr. whose record as the winningest jockey of all time was eclipsed recently by Russell Baze.

"I was on a 17-1 longshot, Laffit was aboard the chalk in a five-and-a-half furlong race on the turf."

"I will never forget Pincay's graciousness," Ramon said. "My idol sought me out after my win and gave me a handshake."

SPORTSWATCH

Allanic battles unbeaten Mexican today

HIGHLY RANKED FILIPINO ROBERT ALLANIC MAKES HIS RING DEBUT IN the United States today as he takes on undefeated Mexican Abner Mares in a 10-round fight at the New Alhambra in Philadelphia. The event, promoted by Oscar De La Hoya's Golden Boy Promotions, will be aired by Telefutura's Solo Boxeo in the US and Mexico. Allanic will have respected Filipino trainer Edito "Ala" Villamor at his corner. The California-based Mares (10-0, 6 KOs), who represented Mexico in the 2004 Athens Olympics, was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. Allanic (15-2, 7 KOs), who trained in Cebu's ALA Gym, prepares for the Mares fight by sparring with Franklin Albia, Gerald Nietes, Weng Haya, and Gil Melligen. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

Solar Sports to air Pacquiao-Solis fight

SOLAR SPORTS WILL AIR THE FIGHT PITTING NATIONAL BOXING HERO Manny Pacquiao and Mexican slugger Jorge Solis on April 14 (April 15 in Manila) at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas. "Pacquiao is the pride of our nation, we can't afford not to show his next fight," said Peter Chanliong, head of Solar Sports, the country's leading sports channel. It is also part of Solar's effort to bring the world's biggest sporting events to local households.

Prayer rally up for Pacman campaign

PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR BASKETBALL PLAYERS AS WELL AS ATHletes from different sports associations will gather at the Aguinaldo Shrine in Kawit, Cavite, to pray for Manny Pacquiao's victory in his April 14 fight with undefeated Jorge Solis of Mexico in Texas. The party-list Puwersa ng Bayaning Atleta (PBA) is spearheading the Grand Prayer Rally. "Wherever you go in the country, people love sports and they always pray for Manny," said Jerry Codiñera, spokesman and nominee of PBA Party-list. Pacquiao has thanked the prayer rally's organizers and fellow athletes for their support.

3-cock derby at Las Piñas gets going

A 3-COCK DERBY WITH P200,000 AT STAKE KICKS OFF at 7 p.m. TONIGHT at the Las Piñas Coliseum. Cockers from Las Piñas and Cavite, as well as leading derby entries from Zambales, Bataan, Rizal, Pampanga and Bulacan are seeing action, said hosts Joey Cheng of Marikina, Angel Tenedero and Uncle Sam group. Official entries must be submitted today at the LPC office, from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Meanwhile, the Summer Big-time 5-Cock Derby comes next at the venue on March 17, with P1 million up for grabs for an entry fee of P33,000. Host of the derby is Ricky Valencia.

HOBIE'S BEST: The crew of Australia's Three Dogs team—Bradley Wilson, Bob Engwirda and Aaron Worrall—beam with pride after topping the recent Zambales-to-Palawan Philippine Hobie Challenge 8, Asia's premier extreme sailing tournament. The five-day, 400-km regatta, presented by Hobie Cat Company of Australia, featured 16 teams from nine countries. With the victorious crew are Tourism Assistant Secretary Cynthia Carrion (left) and Club Paradise director Carmela Laurin.

Nat'l judo championships slated April 29-30 at RMSC

WITH AN EYE TOWARD BREAKING its record gold-medal haul in the last Southeast Asian Games, the Philippine Amateur Judo Association (Paja) is holding the National Individual Judo Championships on April 29 and 30 at the Badminton Hall of the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

White-belt judokas will compete on April 29, while members of the national team tackle the best brown and black belters from among Paja's 46 clubs nationwide the next day.

Men will compete in eight categories—under-55 kilograms, under-60, -66, -73, -81, -90, -100 and over 100 kilos. The women will dispute titles in under-45, -48, -52, -57, -63, -70, -78 and over 78.

The sport produced five gold medals for RP in the last SEA Games competitions held in Mandaue City.

"The championships will also be a venue to scout new talents for the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2012 London Olympics," Paja president Dave Carter, who hopes to break that SEAG mark, said.

CHAMPS: Players and team officials of Ateneo de Davao show their medals and trophy after posting a 25-15 victory over Assumption to capture the second leg of the Cherifer Tangkad Sagad Basketball at the Blue Eagles gym recently. Tournament director Edmundo Badolato, organizer Bernard Ocampo and events coordinator Carlo Reyes awarded the prizes in the hoopfest supported by Adidas.

PBA: We'll gladly take hit for RP cause

By Musong R. Castillo

THE PBA KNOWS THAT LENDING ITS TOP players to the National team has its rewards—and its downside, too.

With 12 of its biggest names out of the Fiesta Cup that opens tomorrow, the PBA is ready to take a hit for national cause and put aside personal interests as far as the business side of the league is concerned.

The reward will come in the form of the satisfaction of contributing to the quest for national pride.

"We recognize that the National players are our stars," commissioner Noli Eala told the INQUIRER yesterday. "[But] It is our honor and pleasure to give the (RP) team the best talents available."

The PBA established record highs in attendance in the last Philippine Cup, especially in the Finals between Barangay Ginebra and San Miguel, which played before overflow crowds each night.

"The PBA is prepared for this eventuality," Eala said of the potential drop in attendance and TV audience with the stars out.

Eala said that the imports will be the main attraction of the tournament, along with players who were previously in the shadows and can take the opportunity to shine.

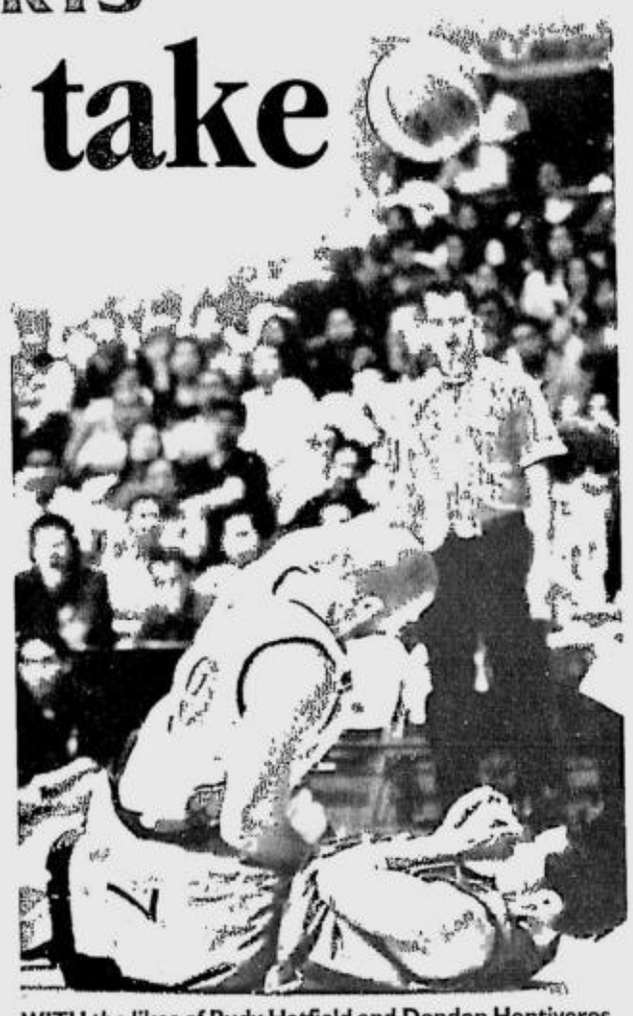
While the RP Team is facing a really busy schedule in the next two months, Eala said that it will be "very much present" in the Fiesta Cup, with games against the regular PBA teams to be scheduled.

In a related development, the P40 million training and exposure budget that is being requested by national coach Chot Reyes is nearing approval.

San Miguel and PLDT/Smart will shoulder the bulk of the expenses as the team's major sponsors.

Meanwhile, with just a day left before the Fiesta Cup opens tomorrow with a doubleheader at the Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay, only Air21 is left without a replacement for the talent it lent to the National Team last week.

The Alaska Aces re-activated Mike Cortez from sick bay, while Red Bull has enlisted Fil-American forward Mike Hrabak to take the place of Mick Pennisi.



WITH the likes of Rudy Hatfield and Dondon Hontiveros out, the PBA expects attendance to fall. PDI PHOTO

President's Cup Regatta raises anchor March 5

THE REGATTA SEASON SAILS FORTH ON March 10 as racers from Australia, China, the United States, Europe, Japan and Southeast Asia vie for top honors in the 5th e-Standard Insurance Manila-to-Boracay Race and the 15th President's Cup Regatta.

The competition, considered as the country's biggest sailing event, will be held in Boracay, Aklan, starting today until March 10.

Since its inaugural race in 2003, the Manila-to-Boracay Race, organized by the Manila Yacht Club, has been dubbed as the most challenging yet most scenic race in Southeast Asia.

The President's Cup Regatta, meanwhile, began in 1993 and was formerly known as the Philippine Easter Regatta.

It became an annual event in 1997 when President Fidel V. Ramos requested MYC to hold an international regatta event during the Apec Summit held here.

The premier yachting event is made possible by e-Standard Insurance, Smart Infinity, American Express, Oakley, Suunto, Johnnie Walker, Fairways & Bluewaters, Sea Air, Clinique, San Miguel Super Dry, Asia Pacific Boating, Manifesto, Calibre Magazine and Crossover 105.1.

Jasmine W. Payo

Santos sued for failing to support child

SANTOS: Abandonment

By June Navarro

ARWIND SANTOS OF AIR21 IS IN HOT water.

The Express rookie was accused of abandonment and of child abuse before the Batangas City regional trial court by a woman who claims to be his wife, a source told the INQUIRER yesterday.

The source said that a certain Karen Maye Santos maintains that she and Santos have a one-year-old daughter, whom the former Far Eastern University star has refused to support financially for more than a year.

Lawyer Wawing Aguilera, Karen Maye's counsel, said the case will be arraigned on March 8, four days after the import-spiced second conference of the Philippine Basketball Association would have started.

Aguilera, of the Mayo Law office, however, refused to talk about the sensitive details of the case pending the decision of the court, except to say that his client was looking to lodge two more criminal cases against Santos.

The INQUIRER learned that the abandonment case was filed last year as a followup to the child-support case that Karen Maye sought with the player in January 2006.

Both parties failed to reach a settlement in the case.

Air21 team manager Lito Alvarez said Santos didn't inform team management about the case although he had heard about it even before the Express made the former UAAP MVP the second overall pick in the 2006 rookie draft.

"It's actually a domestic problem, which Arwind should personally solve," said Alvarez. "But if he (Santos) needs the help of the team, management could provide a lawyer for him."

Sy, Coseteng share top Golden Wheel awards

SY: Overseas honors

COSETENG: RP races

THE LONG WAIT HAS ended for both Tyson Sy and Jody Coseteng as they bagged the titles that have eluded them the past three years yesterday in the 4th annual Golden Wheel Awards 2007 at the Pagcor Theater-Airport Casino Filipino in Parañaque City.

Sy was honored as the Golden Wheel International Driver of the Year following his impressive performance as the top Filipino finisher in the 2006 Asian Formula Three series.

Coseteng, on the other hand, was feted as the Golden Wheel National Driver of the Year for bagging his 10th title in the Philippine National Touring Car Championship series.

Golden Wheel chair and Philippine motorsports "godfather" Johnny Tan said this year's top honorees emerged after the closest fight for the two motorsports awards.

The awards committee, composed of race organizers of various motorsports disciplines, considered the weight of the candidates' struggles and victories, and the impact of their feats.

Sy prevailed over Asian karting champion Marlon Stockinger and FIM UAM Asian motocross 4th runner-up Glenn Aguilar for his fighting spirit and amazing comeback from a crash in Zhuhai, China.

He eventually snatched second overall honors from Ali Jackson after a big performance in the final leg at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

He also copped the overall crown in the Philippine National Formula Three series.

Coseteng dominated the 2006 Philippine Touring Car Series, winning nine of the 11 races. More importantly, the judges were impressed with his brave battles with Kookie Ramirez and young driver Don Pastor where he showed the true mark of a professional racer.

The Golden Wheel Awards also handed plaques of appreciation to San Miguel Corp., Pilipinas Shell, Philippine Auto Components Inc-Denso, Yokohama Tires Philippines, Petron Corp., Fujitsu Ten Corp. of the Philippines, Pagcor and Casino Filipino for their valuable support in keeping local motorsports alive.

The other Golden Wheel awardees were Glenn Aguilar (motocross), Jolet Jao (Road Racing), Matteo Guidicelli (Shell karting), Marlon Stockinger (Asian karting), Jaime Barcial (underbone motorbike), Dave Jota (drag racing), Alex Perez (drifting), Neil Andaya (4x4 offroad) and Noel Rivera (slalom).

Club awards were also handed out to the winners of the 2006 Asian Formula 3, 2006 Batangas Grand Prix, Yokohama Miata Cup and the Shell Superkarting Series.

Nat'l Drag Racing series blasts off at BRC today

SOME 120 CARS WILL BE raced for the various titles at stake in the 2007 San Mig Coffee National Drag Racing Championship today at the Batangas Racing Circuit Drag Strip in Rosario, Batangas.

BRC Drag Racing director Fil Gulfin urges all participants to come early for the open practice and to register their dial slip times for the races sanctioned by the Automobile Association Philippines (AAP) and sponsored by San Miguel Corp.

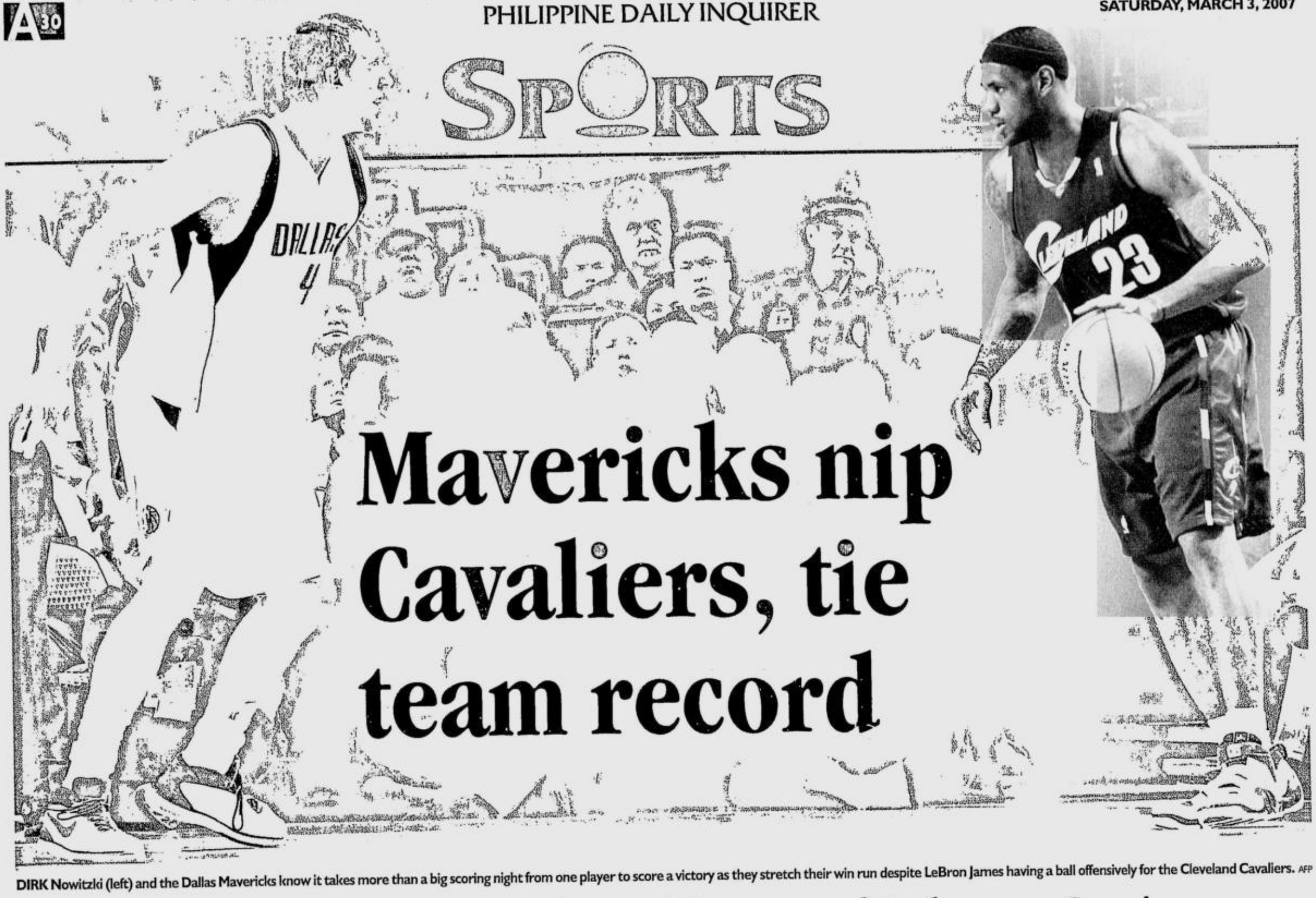
Drivers' briefing is set at 9 a.m. They will be vying for the titles in the Quick 8, Pro class (for cars 13.99 seconds and faster), Sportsman (14 to 15.99), Hot Street division (16 and slower).

All cars must have a minimum weight of 700 kilograms and all wheels' brake system must be functional. Likewise, drivers in the Quick 8 and Pro divisions must secure competition licenses from the AAP.

Racing suit is also required for all drivers to ensure safety.

The challenge this year is to break the track record of 10.962 seconds posted by Jonathan Tiu of Team Ere last season.

SPORTS



Mavericks nip Cavaliers, tie team record

DIRK Nowitzki (left) and the Dallas Mavericks know it takes more than a big scoring night from one player to score a victory as they stretch their win run despite LeBron James having a ball offensively for the Cleveland Cavaliers. AFP

Trail Blazers cap 'strange' day with rout of Bobcats; Sonics score

DALLAS—THE DALLAS MAVERICKS HELD OFF A FURIous comeback bid by the Cleveland Cavaliers to eke out a 95-92 victory on Thursday, tying a franchise-record with their 14th consecutive win.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 24 points and had 11 rebounds as Dallas (49-9) matched the mark they set in 2002.

Cleveland, behind LeBron James's 39 points, trimmed a 12-point Dallas lead to three in the final quarter, but the Cavaliers were unable to get any closer as James missed two free throws and two three-point attempts in the final 13 seconds.

"He was great all night, so I thought one of them for sure was going in," Nowitzki told reporters after the game.

"We dodged a bullet there, obviously." Dallas, which had five players in double figures, never trailed after taking a 25-23 lead with a minute remaining in the first quarter, but Cleveland and James made it interesting.

After Jason Terry's three-pointer gave Dallas an 87-75 advantage with 6:52 left in the game, the Cavaliers outscored the Mavericks 17-8.

James had 11 of those points, but suddenly went cold in the closing seconds.

He missed two free throws with 13 seconds to go and the score 95-92, then missed on a pair of long-range attempts at four seconds and just before the buzzer.

"Same two looks that I got the last game against the Hornets, and I was able to bury them," James told reporters.

"They were some good looks. I thought both of them were going down. I'll take that shot any day." James made 17-of-24 shots from the floor. Donyell Marshall added 14 points and Aleksandar Pavlovic scored 11 for Cleveland.

Terry followed Nowitzki with 20 for Dallas. Josh Howard added 17 and Jerry Stackhouse and Erick Dampier scored 10 each.

In Portland, Oregon, Rookie LaMarcus Aldridge scored 30 points, Zach Randolph and Martell Webster each added 20, and the Trail Blazers capped a strange day with a 127-90 destruction of the Charlotte Bobcats.

Hours earlier, Blazers president and general manager Steve Patterson abruptly resigned after owner Paul Allen decided not to renew his contract.

At halftime, with Portland ahead 60-40, Allen gave a press conference where he affirmed his recommitment to the Blazers and pledged to follow through on efforts to buy back the Rose Garden Arena, which he lost two years ago in bankruptcy.

The Blazers also lost center Joel Przybilla for the season after an MRI revealed the need for arthroscopic surgery.

Matt Carroll had 20 points and Gerald Wallace added 13 for the Bobcats, who matched a season high with their fourth consecutive loss.

In Seattle, Rashard Lewis scored 31 points to lead the SuperSonics over the Los Angeles Clippers, 77-75.

Lewis gave the Sonics a 77-73 lead on a jumper with 24.8 seconds left. A pair of free throws by Corey Maggette with 9.3 seconds left brought the Clippers back to within two.

The Sonics lost the inbounds pass giving the Clippers a chance to tie the game, but Elton Brand's 16-footer at the buzzer hit off the back rim.

Seattle was without leading scorer Ray Allen, who missed the game with inflammation in his left ankle. He has been dealing with the injury for the past month and decided just before the game that the ankle was not responding well enough to play.

NBA TODAY ON BASKETBALL TV
9 a.m.—Orlando vs. San Antonio
(replays @ 4 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.)

Bowling helps Xavier send boys to school

THE XAVIER SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL TRUST fund just got a much-needed shot in the arm in its bid to send underprivileged boys to school.

This came in the form of funds raised by a "bowling for a cause event" held recently at the E-Lanes Bowling Center.

The Xavier community—from students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and special guests—got together to compete in the 4th edition of the Xavier Charity Bowl.

The annual tournament, organized by the Xavier Bowling Team, with the assistance of the Xavier FACAMPA and the High School Student Council, raises funds for the Xavier School Educational Trust Fund (XSETF), which gives deserving but underprivileged boys a chance at a Xavier education.

While the tournament was held in the spirit of fun, things also turned competitive, with the teams constantly trying to come up with the strikes to outdo each other.

In the end, it was Team Dexter, composed of varsity player Stewart Ngo, student Duane Franco and staff member Samson Balance who took home the first place medals along with special prizes.

Meanwhile, the crowd also stayed for the surprise raffle, which featured a brand new Nike watch donated by Xavier alumnus and bowling SEA Games gold medalist Markwin Tee.

The ones left behind still harbor PBA dreams

By Jasmine W. Payo

EVERY YEAR, THE PBA GETS A facelift of sorts through what is called the rookie draft.

And in every PBA opening day, Eugene Tan can recognize the faces of the lucky ones who make it to the pros. For him, they are the same old guys stepping on a new playground.

And yet, with each passing year, the hard-nosed playmaker can only watch as more of his contemporaries march straight into the pro ranks, leaving him behind in the PBL, where he has made a name for himself already; where he continues to nurse a dream.

"Of course I still want to get in the PBA, that's every basketball players' dream," Tan said in Filipino.

Mel Latoreno currently goes about his business of teaching young kids to play basketball so they may become PBA stars one day. It's a job retired players normally perform. But the willowy forward is far from retired.

He hasn't even played in the PBA yet.

"My ultimate goal is to play in the PBA," the 6-foot-4 Latoreno said. "Even if I play for only one year in the PBA, I'll be fulfilled."

Both 29, Tan and Latoreno are just some of the players who have grown roots in the PBL, the farm league that cultivates superstars to feed the PBA. They've applied for the draft before. But not one of them has even ever sat in the negotiating table to discuss a professional contract.

And it's not for lack of talent, Tan says.

"I don't have the charisma," he admitted. "*Alam ko mayabang ang tingin sa akin* (I know people think I'm cocky)."

Tan is not willing to change that just for a shot at the big league.

"I'm not used to PR (public relations)," said Tan. "If a team doesn't like me, it's okay. If a coach is interested because of my skills, that's the only time I try out."

Power forward Jam Alfad, on the other hand, has decided to be pro-active this year. After playing for six years in the PBL, the 27-year-old cager is aiming for another shot at the pros.

"I'm thinking of trying out with some PBA teams," he said.

While Alfad was a popular star with the San Sebastian Stags, the 5-foot-11 Tan has always been under the radar while starring for the University of Manila.

"Talo ako sa exposure (My lack of exposure was a drawback)," said Tan.

But sometimes, exposure doesn't count. Latoreno played for the UST team that won the 1996 UAAP championship. But that hardly translated into anything outside of a PBL career.

"It's also about timing," said Latoreno, who's been playing for 10 years in the PBL. "After we won the championship, some said I should have joined the PBA draft right away."

Alfad, who played for his sixth PBL team—Henkel Sista—last conference, doesn't seem to mind overstaying in the amateurs: "It's still competitive basketball."

Tan remains proud that he has piled up eight PBL championships—six with Welcoat Paints and two with Hapee—in his seven-year stint.

But as far as the pro league is concerned, he isn't about to concede defeat just yet.

"I'm a fighter," said Tan. "Many players have the talent and experience, but not all players are fighters. Not everyone is determined, not everyone has the heart and the desire to win. That's the most important thing for any player."

AS EARLY as the year 2000, Eugene Tan (left) has battled with the likes of Gilbert Malabanan, who already had a stint with Barangay Ginebra in the pros. INQUIRER PHOTO

ST. SCHOLASTICA spikers are all set for the big games ahead.

St. Scholastica teams reach 'Best' final four

HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION CHAMPION ST. Scholastica's College battles San Beda College-Alabang in the semifinal round of the 2007 Best Center Women's Volleyball League on March 4 at the Xavier High School gym in Greenhills.

School of St. Anthony and San Antonio de Padua College collide in the other semifinal pairing of the competitive division.

In the elementary competitive level, reigning titlist Colegio San Agustin takes on Golden Sunbeams Christian School, while St. Scholatica's College and Miriam College tangle in the other Final Four encounter.

Winners of the semifinal matches that kick off at 8 a.m. will advance to the final round on March 11 at San Beda College-Manila.

Semifinal action in the developmental division will also kick off with St. Joseph School of Fairview going up against New Era University and La Salle College Antipolo taking on Assumption Antipolo in the high school level.

Baesa Adventist Elementary School tackles Southville International School in the elementary level, while Siena College and Assumption College collide in the other semifinal pairing.

The Best Center Women's Volleyball League sponsored by Milo gathers the top volleyball varsity teams in the country.

Now on its 12th edition, a total of 44 teams participated in this year's competition.

The Best Center is one of the country's longest-running grassroots sports programs, which hosts tournaments outside of teaching the basics of the sport to young athletes.

Aside from volleyball, the other popular clinic and tournament of the Best Center is basketball.

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■ American IT firm plans to make RP a global hub /B3

Website: www.inquirer.net/business

BUSINESS

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Peso weakens to 48.715 to a dollar

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

ASEAN visitors to RP only 7 percent of total (January to December 2006)

Close to 2.9 million visitors came to the country in 2006, but only 7 percent (202,886 visitors) came from ASEAN member countries. Most (47 percent or 1.3 million) came from East Asian countries like South Korea and Japan.

Source: Department of Tourism ASEAN website
Kate Pedroso Inquirer Research

Investors fear US recession, inflated China stocks

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO TUMBLED TO A LOW OF 48.75 BEFORE CLOSING AT 48.715 against the dollar yesterday as stock market sentiment weakened across the region anew due to concerns over a possible recession in the United States and overvaluation of stocks in China.

Currency traders across the region were still particularly jittery over perceptions of a looming asset price bubble in China, the single biggest magnet for foreign investment in the region that draws about $60 billion in new money each year.

At the Philippine Dealing System, the peso traded between 48.65 and 48.75 against the greenback on volume turnover of $493.5 million.

Roland Avante, treasurer at Chinatrust Commercial Bank Philippines, said: "It's a combination of risk aversion by investors moving out of equities and some corporate demand."

He said there were maturing non-deliverable forward contracts on the peso-dollar rate that added to pressures on the local currency.

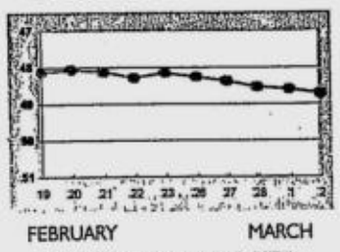
But he noted that the recent shakeout was just a correction in a continuing bull market and that firms with sound fundamentals would still be attractive to investors.

Other currencies in the region also dipped

PESO/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



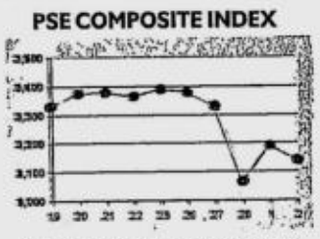
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 48.715 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., March 2, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Smart subscribers hit 25M mark

By Riza T. Olchondra

WIRELESS SERVICES PROVIDER SMART Communications Inc. reached an industry

SMART/ B2

Gov't may push new tax measures

FINANCE SECRETARY MARGARITO Teves admitted it would be "tough" for the government to sustain its fiscal turnaround without imposing new taxes, but said he would await the revenue performance report for the first semester before deciding on whether to push new tax measures in Congress.

If new tax measures would be needed, Teves said that among the options available to the government were the revival of the much-debated tax on text (short messaging system) and changes in the excise tax on "sin" products like alcohol and cigarettes, Teves said in an interview with the INQUIRER.

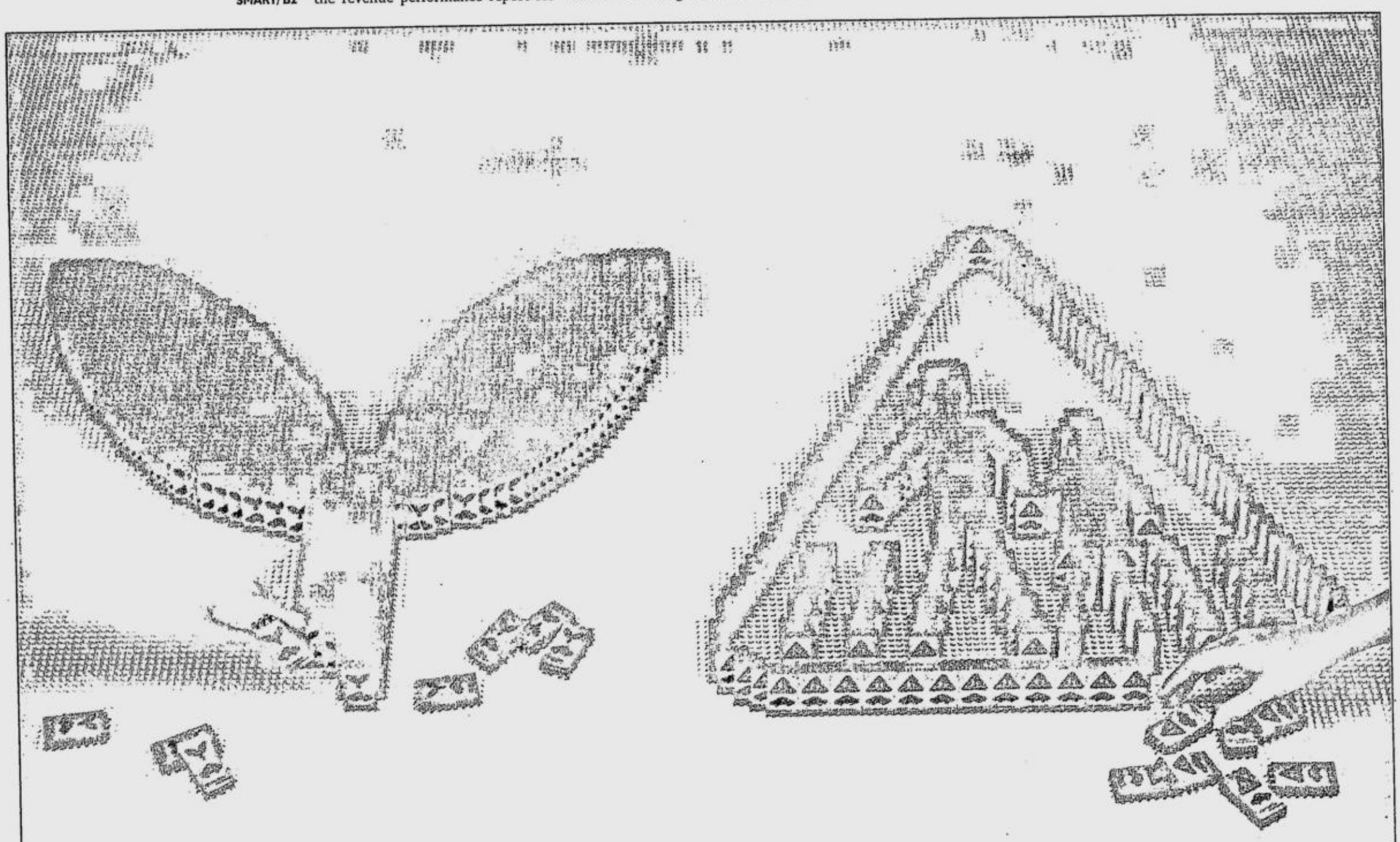
GOV'T/ B2

Shares close 1.56% lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.56-PERCENT lower yesterday as investors remained cautious after the tumble in global markets earlier this week, dealers said.

Buying on Globe Telecom Inc. in late

SHARES/ B2



ECOLOGY and SAFETY

If we work together, little things can make a big difference.

At Toyota, we are committed to working together with you to make the world a safer, greener place. In the Philippines, we are conducting road safety activities aimed at improving public awareness, education, and self-discipline among motorists, pedestrians, and traffic regulation enforcers. To find out more about our road safety activities, visit us at *http://www.toyotaecosafety.com.*

TOYOTA
moving forward

Economic team begins roadshow

Gov't to invite investors in major infra projects

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC MANAGERS HAVE embarked on a domestic roadshow to drum up investments in major infrastructure projects.

The two-week roadshow kicked off yesterday in Davao City, and involves Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr., Trade Industry Peter Favila and Energy Secretary Rafael Lotilla.

The confidence-building roadshow coincided with the big drop in equities markets across the globe, triggered by concerns on a weakening US economy and inflated asset prices in China.

The economic managers used the roadshows as a platform to affirm commitment to fiscal consolidation, after the government cut its budget deficit from P146.5 billion in 2005 to an eight-year low of P62.2 billion in 2006.

Teves told the investors in Davao: "These are some of the many positive signs that our economic reforms are taking hold and we are on track to meet our aggressive but achievable goal of a balanced budget by 2008."

Andaya added that recent fiscal gains would allow the government to invest an additional P369 billion in the next four years to build infrastructure and to improve social services, such as education.

"In 2007, our plan is to help raise the competitiveness of the Mindanao Agribusiness region by investing about P5 billion to build the Laguindingan and Butuan Airports, access roads to Ro-Ro (roll on, roll off) ports and the Surigao-Davao Coastal road, among others," Andaya said.

Tetangco, for his part, said the BSP would focus on a monetary policy supportive of economic growth.

The government is targeting a domestic economic growth of 6.1-6.7 percent this year. It has also raised its export target to 11 percent from 10.5 percent after merchandise exports exceeded 10 percent last year.

Favila said robust export and investment performance would be sustained this year as the government teams up with the private sector to beef up competitiveness.

Lotilla, on the other hand, said raising energy affordability and efficiency was an integral part of the government's strategy to raise competitiveness.

He encouraged local businesses to support the power sector reform program, saying "opportunities for capacity expansion as well as the construction of new capacities are available to the private sector."

Countryside firms come to town

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FOR MOST CITY SLICKERS, SOME SCENTS, tastes and textures bring up memories of their hometown in the province.

For some, it is the taste of Mom's cooking. For others, it is the smell of grass and freshly-turned earth. For others still, it is the feel of age-worn furniture against one's skin.

Today, in a day-long "Shop Till You Drop" festival at the SM Mall of Asia, products made by 23 micro, small and medium-sized businesses from the provinces brings the nostalgia to the metropolis.

Trade Undersecretary Carissa Cruz-Evangelista, who is in charge of the Department of Trade and Industry's regional operations, said most of the MSMEs showcased in the fair were emerging backyard industries from small, nondescript towns.

"These enterprises, through the One Town One Product program, proudly present products that would soon be bestselling items in the Capital," Evangelista said.

She said the products being showcased include handicraft, herbal soap, cutlery, woven products, processed food and beverages, men's and ladies' fashion accessories, fossilized products, native bags, home furnishing and furniture.

"Services of *manghihilot* or traditional masseurs would also be made available in today's event," she added.

There will also be free craft demonstration sessions on woven silver wire bracelet, beadwork for native accessories, native sandal making and paper craft making.

Featured enterprises include Analobel Enterprises (Matnog, Sorsogon), Samahan ng mga Manggagawang Panday sa Tabaco (Tabaco City); Family Sprain Experts Inc. (Magarao, Camarines Sur); Julie Ann's Handicrafts (Torrijos, Marinduque); Rejano's Bakery (Sta. Cruz, Marinduque); Gonzales Longganisa (Vigan, Ilocos Sur) Inabe Handicrafts (Baguio City);

Quirino Fossilized Flower Producers Association (Maddela, Quiriono); Joy Gems Silver Crafts (Sirangan, Sorsogon); NM Carag Furniture (Baggao, Cagayan); Jam's Bag (Baluiag, Bulacan); Sorsogon Food Enterprises (Bulan, Sorsogon); CARM Foods Enterprises (Rosario, Cavite); Farm Treasures Corp. and Ocean's Fresh Tahong Chips (both of Bacoor, Cavite); Cafe Amadeo (Amadeo, Cavite), Getzon Enterprise (Cainta, Rizal); Natomo Manufacturing and RP Lucina's Loomweaving (Bargar, La Union), Delizo's Leathercraft (Naguilian, La Union), and Burdogoy's Antiques and Furniture (Rosario, La Union), a white-water rafting business in Cagayan de Oro City and Casa Accesoria (Mobo, Masbate).

"Several successful Otop entrepreneur will also take part in the event to share their stories," Evangelista said. "We expect them to provide inspiration to thousands of others who are eager to make it big in business."

The official said new products were coming in from the provinces such as *tahong* chips and other delicacies that used to be treasured recipes, but which are now being processed into food products.

"It is a coming out for these small firms which until today would have wanted to quietly do their businesses in their own sleepy towns," she said.

Evangelista said it was a risk for the enterprises to spend big capital to make products especially for this Metro Manila event but by doing so, they get to gauge how consumers respond to their products.

"Little steps in local stores will eventually become big steps in the global markets," she said, referring to the drive of some similar businesses to tap the export market.

Today's fair is part of a three-day program at SM Mall of Asia that promotes Otop products from all over the country.

50 barangays to soon enjoy electricity

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND THE Philippine National Oil Co. have signed a memorandum of agreement to provide electricity to 50 barangays in the Visayas and Mindanao at a cost of P50.4 million.

Under the agreement, electricity will be provided to 50 barangays in Zamboanga Del Sur, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, Antique, Kalinga, Negros Oriental and Cebu.

Each of the 50 barangays will have two communal facilities and 40 households as beneficiaries under the project.

These beneficiaries will be provided with a solar photovoltaic module, complete with a storage battery, battery control unit and four compact fluorescent lamps, all under the PNOC Solar Home Systems Distribution Project.

The P50.4-million funding to provide electricity to the 50 barangays under the DOE-PNOC agreement will come from the DOE's Barangay Electrification Project Fund and 2006 Grants-in-Aid.

PNOC's Solar Homes System Distribution Project, which it aims to complete by mid-2007, is a joint undertaking by PNOC, the DOE and Shell Solar Philippines Corp.

It involves the sale and distribution of 15,100 solar home systems to various areas around the country within five years.

The areas covered include parts of the Cordillera Administrative Region, Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Bicol, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, and Mindanao, particularly Basilan, Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Zamboanga del Sur.

Boulevard buys land in Cavite

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

HOTEL CHAIN OWNER BOULEVARD HOLDings Inc. of the Panlilio family has secured board approval to buy land in Ternate, Cavite from JP Guilds Inc., another Panlilio-controlled company.

Sources said that in exchange for the land, the size of which has yet to be disclosed, BHI will issue shares in favor of JP Guilds.

BHI vice president for finance Mauro Badiola said the deal between JP Guilds Inc. and BHI has yet to be completed.

Badiola said BHI plans to use the property for residential or hotel development.

He declined to give more details about the project pending the completion of the deal.

BHI stockholders last year approved the acquisition of a piece of property in the popular tourist spot Puerto Galera in Oriental Mindoro from JP Guilds Inc., which is controlled by Boulevard Holdings chair Jose Marcel Panlilio.

The property will be acquired by swapping up to 500 million common shares at 10 centavos apiece out of a proposed increase in capital.

The property will be used for the new Friday's Resort hotel.

Peso weakens . . .

From page B1

yesterday, especially the Malaysian ringgit and the Indonesian rupiah.

Philippine economic managers yesterday launched a domestic roadshow to build up local investor confidence in the country's sound fundamentals. *(See story on page B2.)*

Meanwhile, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' policy-making Monetary Board has approved the prepayment by the national government of $126 million in remaining Brady bonds issued at the time that the country was reeling from a debt crisis.

The prepayment of foreign debts is among the measures taken by the BSP and the national government to make use of the huge foreign inflows in recent months.

Smart subscribers hit 25M mark

From page B1

high of 25 million subscribers on its network, equivalent to a 58-percent market share, the company said in a statement.

The wholly owned subsidiary of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) said that of the 25 million users, 17.6 million were subscribers of Smart's Buddy, Gold and Infinity programs. The remaining 7.4 million were users of Talk 'N Text, the prepaid brand of Smart subsidiary Pilipino Telephone Corp.

Smart attributed its subscriber growth to the company's aggressive expansion and upgrade efforts.

As of end-2006, Smart's GSM network consisted of 36 switches and 6,065 base stations, more than 2,200 of which were equipped with wireless broadband capability. Smart also has more than 1,000 3G base stations nationwide.

In the international arena, Smart entered into strategic tie-ups with offshore companies, underscoring its commitment to the growing demands of subscribers overseas.

In December 2006, the company launched Smart Pinoy in the Kingdom of Bahrain in the Middle East, highlighted by the Smart Padala, the world's first international cash remittance service through text.

At the start of 2007, Smart launched the first all-network SMS offering dubbed Lahat Text 35, which allows subscribers to send text messages for as low as 35 centavos each, or P35 for 100 text messages.

Also in the pipeline is the Smart Services Hub, a platform which will enable mobile operators and banks to serve the remittance needs of migrant populations in their respective countries. At the speed and ease of a text message, migrant workers will be empowered to send remittances to their countries via SIM-based services.

Gov't may push new . . .

From page B1

He said the forthcoming Philippine Development Forum with the global donor community in Cebu would likely focus on questions on how the government would sustain the favorable fiscal momentum.

"The issue is sustainability, whether we can do it without raising new taxes, how fast we can bring down the debt stock-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio, whether we can have the organizational capability to really implement the infrastructure projects that we need," Teves said.

Asked whether he thought the government could do it without new taxes, Teves said: "It's going to be tough but we'll be able to make the decision within the next few months. We have to assess the performance of the Bureau of Internal Revenue in the first half."

Teves said the finance department would conduct a thorough performance review to see if existing measures would be enough to meet the government's fiscal targets and finance expenditure requirements.

The national government has made a commitment to balance its cash budget—which has been in a deficit since the Asian currency crisis of 1997—by 2008.

Last year, the government raised the value-added tax rate to 12 percent from 10 percent and removed certain exemptions to stabilize its finances. It is also seeking the rationalization of fiscal incentives as the current system causes a heavy drain on revenue collections.

"The (measures) we have concentrated on are only what I call revenue-enhancement measures and not really new tax measures. We need to find out whether in addition to the revenue enhancement, we need new tax measures," Teves said. *Doris C. Dumlao*

Shares close . . .

From page B1

trade helped the market pare earlier losses, they added.

The composite index fell 49.78 points to 3,140.34 after moving between 3,105.69 and 3,190.12. The main index fell 7.3 percent from last week.

Losers overwhelmed gainers 115 to 17, while 36 stocks were unchanged. Volume amounted to 8.9 billion shares worth P4.6 billion.

"We clawed back some of the earlier losses and this is a positive signal. We may see a recovery early next week although I don't expect any big movement," said Harry Liu of Summit Securities Inc.

"We were in an overbought condition and this week's correction is what we had been waiting for," he added. *AFP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 2, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	11	11	10.5	10.5	77,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	57	57	55	55.5	3,365,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	66.5	66.5	65	66	1,994,800
China Banking Corp.	870	870	860	870	2,430
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	400
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.55	0.55	0.53	0.55	10,710,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	100	100	99.5	99.5	6,710
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	62	62	60.5	61	2,118,400
Philippine National Bank	50	50	49	49.5	103,000
Phil. Savings Bank	64	64	61	62.5	6,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	41	41	39	40	186,400
Security Bank Corp.	78	78	77	77.5	158,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	62	62	59	59	65,500
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.1	6.2	1,659,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	37	37	37	37	20,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1600	1615	1600	1615	180
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.02	2.08	1.96	1.96	781,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	750	755	730	740	13,470
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2050	2070	2050	2065	780
Ivantage Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.58	1.58	1,185,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.9	6	5.8	5.9	10,352,000
First Gen Corp.	52	53	52	53	1,208,200
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	76	76	74	74	1,303,000
Manila Electric Co. A	73.5	73.5	70.5	71	752,400
Manila Electric Co. B	74.5	74.5	70.5	71	1,103,800
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.3	9.5	9.3	9.4	5,152,000
Petron Corp.	4.45	4.5	4.35	4.5	6,927,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	260,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.32	1.38	1.32	1.38	740,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25	25	25	16,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	51	51	49	49.5	1,764,100
Liberty Flour Mills Inc.	21	21	21	21	67,200
RFM Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.32	341,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	3,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.42	0.45	0.41	0.41	150,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63	64	63	63.5	111,800
San Miguel Corp. B	75	75	75	75	25,800
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.08	2.14	2.06	2.08	821,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.75	17.75	17.5	17.75	857,300
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.68	1.68	1.62	1.64	33,334,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.7	3,816,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	10,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.6	8.7	8.4	8.7	2,161,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.7	5.9	364,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5	5	4.9	4.95	2,211,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.62	0.65	0.62	0.65	80,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Active Alliance Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.36	0.37	0.34	0.36	36,370,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Asia Amalgamated Holdings	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	20,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	352,100,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	17,000,000
Ayala Corp.	565	570	550	560	246,040
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.73	0.73	460,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.3	8.3	8.2	8.3	4,384,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.06	0.0625	0.06	0.0625	10,700,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	806,000
APC Group Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	2,200,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.013	292,500,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.38	1.4	1.36	1.38	9,790,000
Aries Prime Res. Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	30,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.7	4.05	3.7	3.75	245,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	6.4	6.4	6.1	6.3	591,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.9	9.9	9.8	9.8	27,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.6	3.65	37,579,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.9	7	6.9	7	1,442,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5.3	5.3	5	5.1	1,422,000
F&J Princ.E Holdings Corp.	1	1	1	1	45,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	120,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.6	193,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.5	12.75	834,900
Jolliville Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	40,000
Keppel Holdings	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1,000
Medco Holdings	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.37	320,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	20,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	10	10	9.5	9.7	2,423,600
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.02	2.02	1.94	1.98	467,000
Pacifica	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	1,400,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	8,490,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	50,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	70,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.2	0.205	42,020,000
SM Investments Corp.	360	360	350	360	157,900
South China Resources Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	290,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.6	110,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	400,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.75	16	15.5	15.75	9,228,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	20,000
Belle Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.34	1.38	16,232,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.18	1.2	1,320,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.45	830,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.85	3.55	3.85	308,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.44	2.5	2.34	2.36	2,888,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	4,440,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.83	0.83	0.78	0.81	78,240,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.74	1.76	1.72	1.76	1,650,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0725	0.075	0.07	0.07	23,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.66	1.68	1.58	1.58	298,711,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	120,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	120,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	1,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	65,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	80,500,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.5	0.5	0.46	0.49	3,320,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.85	0.86	0.84	0.84	4,050,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	300,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.95	3	2.85	2.95	71,582,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.8	4.8	4.4	4.4	108,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.66	0.95	0.61	0.91	51,560,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	150,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.7	2.7	2.65	2.65	32,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	19.25	19.5	19	19.25	4,833,500
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.65	0.65	0.63	0.64	8,600,000
SM Development Corp.	4	4	3.85	3.95	1,199,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.75	11	11.5	18,695,100
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.71	0.73	0.71	0.73	350,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.19	0.16	0.18	91,640,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.75	23.75	23	23.75	117,600
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.74	1.78	9,003,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1320	1380	1320	1370	78,390
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	7.1	7.1	6.9	7.1	4,529,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2400	2455	2365	2415	350,120
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.26	0.26	19,200,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.35	4	3.35	4	246,000
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	2,500,000
Ionics Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	310,000
IPVG Corp.	6.1	6.2	5.7	5.8	2,336,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	700,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.065	0.07	0.06	0.07	1,270,700,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.7	1.72	1.6	1.72	1,661,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.32	2.4	2.3	2.36	22,000
Philweb Corp.	0.048	0.048	0.046	0.048	365,400,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	30	30	29	29	1,436,600
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	122,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.85	2.85	2.6	2.75	6,596,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.37	0.37	4,570,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.92	0.92	0.86	0.89	1,740,000
EDUCATION					
iPeople Inc.	3.4	3.4	3.35	3.35	230,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	5	5	5	5	10,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.8	2.95	2.7	2.95	2,385,000
Paxys Inc.	28	28	26.5	27.5	1,420,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.4	5.4	5.1	5.4	3,793,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.7	5.7	5.3	5.4	856,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	433,400,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.9	9	8.7	8.8	756,000
Benguet Corp. A	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.5	34,700
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.68	1.78	117,753,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.29	16,560,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.35	0.35	0.32	0.35	11,280,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.029	0.03	0.028	0.03	639,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.034	0.034	0.032	0.034	333,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.019	0.02	0.018	0.02	3,527,700,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.15	4.15	4	4.1	10,155,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	17.5	17.75	17.5	17.5	121,200
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.74	0.74	0.69	0.69	160,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.2	1.24	1.16	1.18	4,659,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.31	0.32	3,340,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.014	28,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.014	100,700,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	213,300,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	120,000

CURRENCIES

March 2, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.758380	1.000000	48.5710
Japan	Yen	0.006445	0.008498	0.4128
United Kingdom	Pound	1.485363	1.958600	95.1312
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.097085	0.128016	6.2179
Switzerland	Franc	0.620555	0.818264	39.7439
Canada	Dollar	0.647027	0.853170	41.4393
Singapore	Dollar	0.496582	0.654793	31.8040
Australia	Dollar	0.595789	0.785608	38.1578
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.011725	2.652661	128.8424
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.202272	0.266716	12.9547
Brunei	Dollar	0.494961	0.652656	31.7002
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000109	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.022604	0.029806	1.4477
UAE	Dirham	0.206547	0.272353	13.2285
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.318600	64.0457
Korea	Won	0.000805	0.001062	0.0516
China	Yuan**	0.097938	0.129141	6.2725
Argentina	Peso	0.244876	0.322893	15.6832
Brazil	Real	0.357390	0.471254	22.8893
Denmark	Kroner	0.134250	0.177022	8.5981
India	Rupee	0.017205	0.022686	1.1019
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216340	0.285266	13.8557
Mexico	New Peso	0.068002	0.089668	4.3553
New Zealand	Dollar	0.526178	0.693818	33.6994
South Africa	Rand	0.104088	0.137250	6.6664
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023055	0.030400	1.4766

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 1, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of March 1, 2007

American IT firm plans to make RP a global hub

Pro-V planning to hire 500 people within the year

By Riza T. Olchondra

US SOFTWARE ENGINEERING COMPANY Pro-V International will formally open this month its technology hub in the Philippines and will eventually make it the 'heart' of its global business, president and COO Jim Lynch said.

The company's facility will be at the GT International Tower along Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Citing the Filipinos' familiarity with the Western culture and English proficiency, and the competitive costs offered by the country, Lynch said he was confident his company's Philippine office could soon take over the majority of the operations at its Florida headquarters.

"We only have 54 employees at the moment, about 20 of them are in development and production, but we hope to grow our Philippine team to about 500 within the year and eventually make this facility the heart of our worldwide operations," he said.

The company provides an entire list of IT-related outsourced services such as staff augmentation, software development, manpower training, customer relations management, data center management, network security and data warehousing.

Pro-V's main target firms are healthcare companies, schools, retailers and government agencies.

The Philippine operations will cover key aspects, including engineering, human resources, public relations and sales.

"The Philippine site can spearhead sales work in Asia Pacific to complement the company's sales efforts out of the United States, United Kingdom and Netherlands offices," Lynch said.

The small software development industry in the Philippines can grow steadily by giving professionals overseas exposure and then bringing them back to the country to do the work, Pro-V International Philippines country manager Robert P. Berry said.

"We will not be contributing to the brain drain, instead, we will help start a brain gain," he said.

Plea for safeguard duty on soap inputs junked

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE and Industry said it had dismissed a petition of domestic soap makers for a safeguard duty on the main ingredient of their products, a move which a trade expert lauded.

Jeremy I. Gatdula, a lawyer specializing on trade advisory services, said the ruling showed that the government was in favor of good, beneficial competitiveness.

"This decision is good news for consumers since it gives them access to affordable soap and detergent products," Gatdula said. "It also benefits the hundreds of workers employed in the domestic soap industry."

Applied to agricultural and non-agricultural products, a safeguard duty is an additional tax imposed on imported articles in case there is a finding that substantial importation directly caused injury to the domestic industry.

Similar to dumping and countervailing measures, a safeguard duty is one of the trade protection measures available under the World Trade Organization.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said the order denied the application for definitive general safeguard measures against imported sodium tripolyphosphates-technical grade.

STPP-TG is a powdered or granular substance which is used for making synthetic detergents and purifying China clay; as anti-pitch agent in paper-making and textile processing, and as dispersant in cement.

The DTI order was a reversal of the agency's initiatives last year when it imposed a provisional safeguard duty in the form of a cash bond amounting to P14.15 per kilogram of imported STPP-TG, effective until February 2007.

In the same month, the Bureau of Customs issued Customs Memorandum Circular No. 170-2006 to implement the said DTI order.

The provisional safeguard duty was in response to the petition of CAWC Inc., formerly Chemphil Albright and Wilson Corp., which sought relief from stiff foreign competition.

The case was forwarded to the Tariff Commission which, following formal investigation, found there was a need for the additional tariff.

Favila said the DTI had reviewed the commission's findings and determined that the imposition of the definitive safeguard measure does not serve the condition of public interest.

Favila added that the decision also took into account the consuming public, which would be susceptible to price fluctuation as the additional duty remained in force.

He explained that the DTI's recommendation was in view of Section 5 of the Safeguard Measures Act, which states that "in the case of non-agricultural products, the (Trade) Secretary shall first establish that the application of such safeguard measures will be in public interest."

There's more to this store than just selling

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

I-SPORT LIFE Ministries helps put a smile on the faces of the less fortunate.

LIKE OTHER RETAIL FIRMS, I-Sport Life Inc., which operates the chain of Fila stores in the Philippines, wants to generate as much sales as it possibly can.

For I-Sport chief executive Cris Abad Santos-Albert, more sales means more funds going to the I-Sport Life Ministries, a subsidiary which handles the company's philanthropy programs.

Albert told the INQUIRER that the ministry had been supporting a number of orphanages and foundations since 2002.

Close to Albert's heart is a parenting foundation, which helps children who are about to be adopted make the transition to life with their adoptive parents.

Logistics

I-Sports Ministries has also extended its reach to include helping areas ravaged by natural disasters under its Operation Compassion program.

This year, Albert expects that a good portion of I-Sport Life Ministries' funds will go to the construction of houses and relief work in Bicol, which is still recovering from the adverse effects of typhoon Reming.

"We take care of the logistics because people cannot hear the word of God if they are hungry," Albert said.

CORPORATE CITIZEN

The company is also involved in the Christ the Living Word Bible study program and Isabella Bright Light, which provides foster care for abandoned kids.

To ensure the sustainability of its philanthropic efforts, I-Sport Life sets aside 10 percent of its profit to finance the ministry's efforts.

I-Sport Life has also solicited the support of its customers through its "Buy A Sole, Feed A Soul" campaign started two years ago, wherein P20 will be added to the ministry's coffers for every shoe sold during the period, usually from Dec. 1 to 30.

THE OWNER of the Fila brand in the Philippines is into rebuilding homes in Bicol.

Higher purpose

"The success of the promotion blessed so many lives that year and gave them the true Christmas experience and joy that each and every person truly deserves," Albert said.

Albert said the ministry was born out of the management and employees' commitment to a "higher purpose."

"With my husband being a pastor, we feel that there's a bigger purpose for our company than to just sell," Albert said.

That sense of purpose extends to the employees, who attend Bible studies every Wednesday to remind themselves that their job is not just to sell Fila shoes or apparel, but to also provide good service and contribute to the growth of the company, and consequently, the ministry.

"We try to teach Bible-based values, like the proper use of talent, that work should be done correctly," Albert said, "I believe that's why we get really hard-working and passionate people to stay and work with us."

She said having good people has been a factor in growing the sales of Fila, which has more than 150 stores nationwide.

During the promotion period itself, Albert reported the doubling of the company's sales from the previous year, allowing I-Sport Life to expand its ministerial reach.

Sense of awareness

"Aside from helping our less fortunate brothers and sisters, the aggressive advertising campaign sparked a sense of social awareness across all demographics," Albert said, "Whether a person purchased a Fila item, the ad campaign reminded so many that Christmas is truly a time of giving and sharing, and for this, the campaign was a major success."

She said I-Sport plans an even bigger Christmas promotion this year to generate more funds for the ministry, and Bicol will still be a big part of the rebuilding efforts.

"We believe that it is our purpose to help provide salt and light in a dark world," Albert said.

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3 March 2006

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March 7, 2006
Wednesday, 10:00 AM
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Baguio City

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For further inquiries and updates, you may contact the following telephone numbers from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.:

Manila Office 02 687 5279 or 687 6524

Baguio Office 074 444 2132 or 444 2133

Thank you

ATTY. MAURICIO G. DOMOGAN
Chairman
Membership Committee

Camp John Hay Golf Club PO Box 1141 Loakan Rd., Baguio City Philippines · Phone (074) 444-2501 · E-mail
Manila Office Unit 1107-A 11th Floor West Tower Philippine Stock Exchange Road Ortigas Center Pasig City
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Nestle Waters selling assets to Gokongweis

NESTLE WATERS PHILIPPINES HAS agreed to sell its manufacturing assets to Universal Robina Corp.

The agreement will take effect on April 2.

Under the deal, Nestle Waters will sell the Hidden Spring trademark to URC. The latter will also get the license to bottle and sell Nestle Pure Life in accordance with the Nestle quality guidelines, which are among the most stringent in the market.

URC is the most suitable buyer for the Nestle Waters assets because of its core competence in bottled beverages, as shown by its success with the C2 brand.

Nestle Waters started operating in the Philippines in 1996, with manufacturing facilities located in San Pablo, Laguna.

URC has agreed to hire the majority of the factory-based employees of Nestle Waters to ensure continuity of operations.

The selling party, for its part, will pay all employees a separation package as provided by company policy and the existing collective bargaining agreement. Nestle Water will also provide employees additional financial assistance to assist them in their transition. It will also put in place safety net programs for affected employees, including livelihood courses, outplacement support and lifestyle planning workshops.

Earlier, another member of the Nestle group in the country, Nestle Philippines Inc., had announced plans to invest at least P2.3 billion this year in its four plants to jack up production capacity.

Nandu Nandkishore, NPI chair and chief executive, said this year's capital expenditure would bring the firm's investments since 2003 to about P10 billion.

He said the amount earmarked for 2007 would be used to acquire manufacturing equipment and support infrastructure such as laboratories and automated process control systems.

BIODIVERSITY PROGRAM

RP obtains $3.5M in yearly investment from US-based CI

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL Resources Secretary Angelo Reyes yesterday signed with a United States-based non-government organization a memorandum of agreement that would pave the way for a yearly investment of $3.5 million in the conservation of Philippine biodiversity.

Reyes signed the agreement with Conservation International in San Francisco, California, following his presentation of the country's biodiversity program and the government's policies and initiatives on species and habitat conservation during the US NGO's board meeting.

CI works with various countries on the conservation of the earth's living heritage and promotes harmonious co-existence of man and nature. The NGO meets only once a year and is celebrating its 20th founding anniversary.

The CI board is composed of prominent personalities including Peter A. Seligmann, Harrison Ford, Gordon Moore of Intel, Rob Walton of Wal-mart, James D. Wolfensohn formerly of the World Bank and Ann Friedman. From the Philippines, First Gen president Federico R. Lopez is a member of the board.

The NGO is investing $3.5 million a year in the Philippines for biodiversity conservation and related environmental programs. The projects lined up for funding include the establishment of protected area networks in the Sierra Madre, Eastern Mindanao and Southern Palawan biodiversity corridors, as well as the sustainable management of marine biological resources within the Sulu Sulawesi seas.

In his presentation, Reyes took pride in the richness of the country's biodiversity emphasizing the Philippines being one of the few countries with the highest level of biodiversity in the world. Recently, CI also identified the Philippines as one of the 18 mega diverse countries in terms of biological resources.

Although the Philippines has a very high concentration of species, many of them endemic, they are under various threats of habitat destruction, he said. Such situation, he added, gave the country an unnecessary handicap in meeting its need for environmental management and sustainable development.

He said that in recognizing the urgency of the state of Philippine biodiversity, the government had issued several policies with the end in view of creating an enabling environment that will narrow the gap between the country's ideal and present capacity in solving its alarming environmental problems.

During the meeting, Reyes signed a memorandum of understanding with CI to guide the cooperation and coordination effort between his department and the NGO for the sustainable management of the rich biodiversity of the Philippines.

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

PROPERTY

Residential fires top list

By Tessa R. Salazar

RESIDENTIAL FIRES topped the list of fire incidents among property fires in 2006, surpassing the number of fires occurring in commercial/mercantile and industrial/factory establishments.

The most recent data from the Bureau of Fire Protection collating nationwide fire incidents listed all property fires in 2006 at 8,823, resulting in estimated damages of P3.203 billion.

Incidence of fire

Residential fires numbered 2,878, followed by grass/rubbish fires at 2,582. Miscellaneous fires (towers, pier, water-surrounded structures, underground structures and windowless buildings) numbered 1,865, motor vehicles at 338, commercial at 327, industrial 220, educational 150, mix (stores, etc.) 45, storage 112, place of assembly 86, business/government 83, institutional 25, ship/water vessel 11, and locomotive 1.

Recorded fatalities in 2006 were 267 civilians and four firefighters. Injuries were tallied at 521 civilians and 75 firefighters.

Top causes

Chief Inspector Renato Marcial of the Bureau of Fire Protection's public information office estimated that 50 percent of residential fires came from deprived settlers.

Among the top causes of fires were faulty electrical connections, open flames (candles, torches) and electrically operated appliances.

Marcial reported that in slum areas, electrical overloads and short circuits were often the causes of fires.

"Huwag mag overload or magnakaw ng kuryente kasi mali-mali ang pagkakaconnect. (Don't steal electricity. Unauthorized electrical attachments can cause fire)," Marcial cautions.

2006 less than 2005

There were fewer incidents of fire in 2006 compared to 2005, however. In 2005, fire incidents numbered 10,728 resulting in P3.277 billion in damages. The top causes are from grass/rubbish at 3,727 followed by residential fires at 3,254.

A total of 247 civilians and two firefighters were killed in fires in 2005, while 105 firefighters and 581 civilians were injured.

Prevent fires from eating away your property

FOR AN OBJECT TO IGNITE, THERE should be the presence of heat, fuel and oxygen. Oxygen is present in the air while paper, grass and dried leaves can act as the "fuel." Temperatures of fuels reach a certain critical point where ignition is possible. Without any one of these three essentials, no fire can result.

In 2005, INQUIRER Property came up with tips on how to keep your home safe from the lethal combination of these three factors essential to start a fire.

A house, in reality, is always theoretically fire prone. Your indoor kitchen provides a combination of heat, fuel and oxygen. Matches and other combustibles can be sometimes in reach of children.

To compound the risks are electrical systems that are often hidden from view. Faulty and wornout wirings can lead to short-circuits (the critical ignition point of electrical systems), and when homeowners choose not to have licensed electrical engineers conduct fire safety inspections, this possibility of a fire caused by electrical wirings becomes an inevitability.

Home, lifesaving tips

From the Bureau of Fire Protection, here are home and life-saving tips:

- Put phone numbers of your nearest fire department near your phone.
- Eliminate fire hazards through good housekeeping: dispose waste paper, rubbish and other flammable materials regularly.
- Keep matches out of children's reach.
- Oil or gas lamps and candles should be placed away from curtains. Do not light them near windows, fans or where children or pets may topple them. Put out the flame before going to bed.
- Do not keep flammable materials like gasoline, alcohol and paint inside the house.
- Regularly check your electrical installations, and have all frayed wirings and electrical fixtures changed or repaired by a licensed electrician.
- Do not overload electrical circuits by putting additional lights and appliances.
- Blown fuses should not be replaced with coins, wires or any other metal.
- Never leave a lighted cigarette/cigar/pipe unattended. This may fall on flammable materials.
- Keep a first-aid kit handy.

Tessa R. Salazar

Windmill cylinders with spiral fins

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amado de Jesus

SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, MAN HAS ALways been fascinated with the power of wind. He learned to harness it to provide motive power for transportation. He also learned to use it to run machines that grind grain and spices, to draw water, saw wood and hammer seeds. These machines, now popularly called windmills, existed in Persia as far back as the 7th century A.D.

Most people are familiar only with the famous windmills of The Netherlands, where they were used to drain areas of the Rhine River delta as early as the 14th century. Actually, windmills have existed for many years in countries like the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Germany, The Netherlands, Denmark, Siberia, the United States, China and countries along the Mediterranean coast.

However, it was at the advent of the industrial revolution that windmills gave way to steam and internal combustion engines as major sources of energy for industries. As a result, most historic windmills are now being preserved for their historic value. To do this, they have to be regularly used to prevent their wooden parts from breaking down due to exposure to the elements and attacks of pests.

Today, with environmental concern on the receding supply of fossil fuels in the forefront, wind power is staging a comeback as more people realize their potential as a renewable source of energy and an effective way to combat global warming. The new generation of windmills is now referred to as wind turbines.

What is a wind turbine?

A wind turbine is a machine that converts wind power into mechanical energy or electricity by using a generator.

There are many wind turbines now installed in Korea, Japan, China and India. In the Philippines, the wind turbines installed in Ilocos, is the first major wind farm in Southeast Asia.

In a recent meeting in Manila called "Magnus: Power Winds Symposium Philippines 2007," Philippine Nippon Steel, Nippon Steel Composite, Mekaro Akita Co. Ltd. and Ashikaga Institute of Technology introduced an innovative type of windmill called Magnus Wind Turbine, the world's first windmill cylinders with spiral fins. It was developed by engineer Nobuhiro Murakami, inventor and CEO of Mekaro Akita Co. Ltd.

The Magnus Wind Turbine consists of a horizontal axis windmill with slender cylinders that spin about their longitudinal centerlines. Normally in place of these cylinders are conventional airfoil shaped blades.

Magnus effect

This new type of wind turbine is based on the Magnus effect. It is the force perpendicular to the forward motion on a spinning cylindrical or spherical object moving through a fluid or gas. It is responsible for the curved trajectory of a tennis or a golf ball and affects the path of an artillery shell. It is named after Heinrich Gustav Magnus, a German chemist and physicist, who first investigated the effect in 1853.

The invention was partly influenced by a Flettner ship designed by a German engineer in the 1920s based on the Magnus effect. The ship had small engines to power rotating cylinders driving it more efficiently than conventional propellers.

Environment-friendly

The Magnus Wind Turbine, according to Murakami, is adaptable to Philippine wind conditions. Its unusual blade design reduces its vulnerability to damage caused by high winds, a major cause of wind turbine failures. With the slim design of its blades it has less chances of hitting birds and bats. Its propellers are not visible and have low noise level, making it an ideal and environment-friendly wind turbine.

It has a 2-meter diameter model and a 10-meter diameter wind turbine on a shaft 10 to 15 meters in height rated at 10kW. The cost of the wind turbine is $18,000 exclusive of foundation and installation costs. With a lifespan of about 20 years, its expected payback period is about 10 years.

Engineer Rufino Bomasang, chair of NorAsian Energy Co. Ltd. gave a report on Philippine energy resources. He said that next to geothermal and hydro energy, wind power is the next target of development on a commercial scale. He suggested that 3 demo projects be put up by Magnus wind turbine in the country, one near the coastline, another atop a mountain and a third one in an urban area like Manila.

Energy Undersecretary Mariano Salazar expressed optimism with the introduction of the innovative wind turbine in the country. He said it is in line with the government's goal of achieving 60 percent self sufficiency in energy by 2010, and the development of clean, renewable sources of energy. He suggested that a wind study be made to analyze and determine the best places for wind turbines.

THE MAGNUS Wind Turbine was partly influenced by a Flettner ship designed by a German engineer in the 1920s based on the Magnus effect. WIKIMEDIA FOUNDATION INC.

Other Japanese executives who spoke during the symposium were engineer Minoru Yoneno, senior adviser, Nippon Steel Composite; Hideo Nakahara, director, Philippine Nippon Steel and Prof. Izumi Ushiyama, VP, Ashikaga Institute of Technology.

The panel of reactors from the University of the Philippines included Alexander Paran, Department of Mechanical Engineering; Gilda Padilla, Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering; and Eddie Listanco, department head, National Institute of Geological Sciences. Conference emcee was Giovanni Reyes, School of Urban Planning and Regional Planning.

Wind energy is a major technological breakthrough in the current search for sustainable alternatives to nonrenewable energy sources such as oil, gas and coal.

The Philippines is honored with the introduction of this technology given by Nippon Steel, Mekaro Akita and Ashikaga Institute of Technology, and the inventor of the world's first cylinder with spiral fins, engineer Nobuhiro Murakami.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail amadodejesus@gmail.com

Experience exotic Bali at Raya Garden

RAYA Garden's property development and management team, from left: Raya Garden project architect Ramil Presa; engineer Elmer Civil, DMCI Homes VP and director for Design and Construction; and engineer Louie Maligaya, project manager

BALI IS AN ISLAND IN INDONESIA and the country's largest tourism destination. Known for its long sandy beaches set against the backdrop of its rich, exotic culture, tourists who find themselves in Bali realize just how peaceful life could be. And this is the simple reason tourists who have had a taste of Bali keep coming back for more.

So imagine if you could live in Bali all-year round, when, at the end of a long and busy day you can put up your feet, enjoy the cool breeze, savor in the peace and quiet, and let your thoughts wander as you gaze at a lotus pond.

This dream is already a reality for some fortunate enough to have secured a home in Raya Garden Condominiums, DMCI Homes' enchanting development in Parañaque City.

Urban sanctuary

Raya, the name of the community, literally means great in Bahasa, hence, a great garden. It is a community inspired largely by Balinese living and is meant to be an urban sanctuary for its residents.

Engineer Elmer Civil, DMCI Homes vice president and director for Design and Construction, says they chose Bali as an inspiration because it is unique. "We're one of the few developers that opted to use Bali as an inspiration because it's quite expensive."

DMCI Homes knows that it is important to consider the tropical climate in the Philippines when it comes to designing the buildings and the layout of the community. This is why they chose Bali as an inspiration since the design elements of Balinese architecture consider the tropical weather in Indonesia which is not much different from Philippine weather.

Totally different experience

Civil says they wanted to give residents a totally different experience in Raya Garden despite having the 1.9-hectare property in Merville sit just outside the South Luzon Expressway.

Raya Garden is a stone's throw away from the Central Business District of Makati and major thoroughfares like Edsa and C-5. Project architect Ramil Presa says, "It's very accessible, very in-city, very convenient."

Raya Garden has three medium-rise condominiums and will have two 15-story high-rise residential buildings that bear the mark of quality for which DMCI Homes is widely recognized.

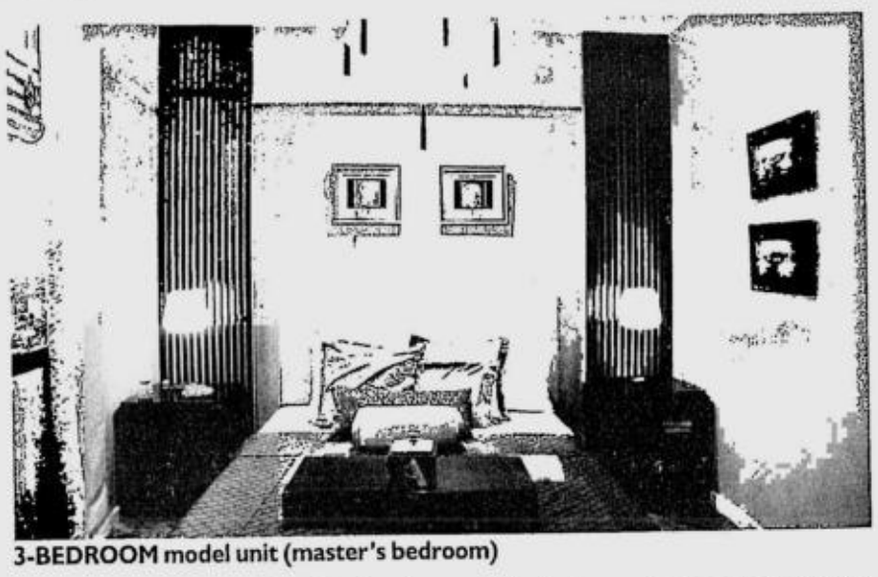
He is pleased to note that he and his team of architects and engineers really poured over the plans to make the living environment for its residents as comfortable as possible.

Raya Garden has spacious two-to four-bedroom units and Civil and his team took into consideration the residents' need for modern conveniences such as elevator access for all buildings and individual drying and storage areas.

For pleasure, relaxation

But as with any DMCI Homes community, it's the spectacular amenities that take one's breath away. Everything inside the community is designed for the residents' pleasure and relaxation.

The large Bali-inspired clubhouse combines both form and function for the residents. Designed for various small gatherings, the three distinct areas can hold more than 300 people. There is an open lounge area, a viewing deck and an air-conditioned function room fully-equipped with audio-visual facilities.



3-BEDROOM model unit (master's bedroom)

Surrounding the clubhouse is a Balinese garden and a floating cabana set atop the lotus pond that makes for a totally tranquil experience.

Raya Garden also has sports amenities within its walls, an infinity adult pool, a kiddie pool, a basketball court and a play area for children.

DMCI trademark

Civil is very proud to say, "We're one of the top developers as far as medium-rise is concerned. Our price is very competitive so other developers cannot beat our price. And our quality being a triple A builder turned developer, we know how to do it in the most economical and efficient way based on our more than 50 years experience in the construction business. Our people are trained in construction so they know how to do things efficiently—faster and with better quality."

As of January 2007, more than 20 residents have already moved in to Raya Garden and the number rises every day. DMCI Homes is known for its move-in policy that lets buyers move in once they have completed at least 10 percent in payments.

Being confident about their projects is also another DMCI Homes trademark. And why not? Raya Garden project manager Louie Maligaya knows they have a lot to be proud of. He enthuses, when building officials from the Parañaque city government came around to inspect Raya Garden, they told us how different Raya Garden is from the other developments.

Affordable mid-rise condo rises in Mandaluyong

By Charles E. Buban

MID-RISE CONDOMINIUM IS BETter for a number of developers who are building affordable homes within Metro Manila.

"For one, building time for these buildings between five and 10 stories is much shorter. This is advantageous to homebuyers who would want to move in immediately," said Linda Tan of RJ Lhinet Development Corp.

RJ Lhinet started out as a subdivision developer having completed two projects—one in Marilao, Bulacan and another in Tanza, Cavite.

"But with few available sprawling lots (to develop a subdivision) here in Metro Manila, building a mid-rise becomes more attractive for developers of affordable homes," she explained.

THE DEVELOPER believes in developing affordable yet quality housing projects.

Completed

Recently, RJ Lhinet completed One Sapphire, its first condominium project located on Dr. Jose Fabella Road (near the corner of Celia street) in Mandaluyong City.

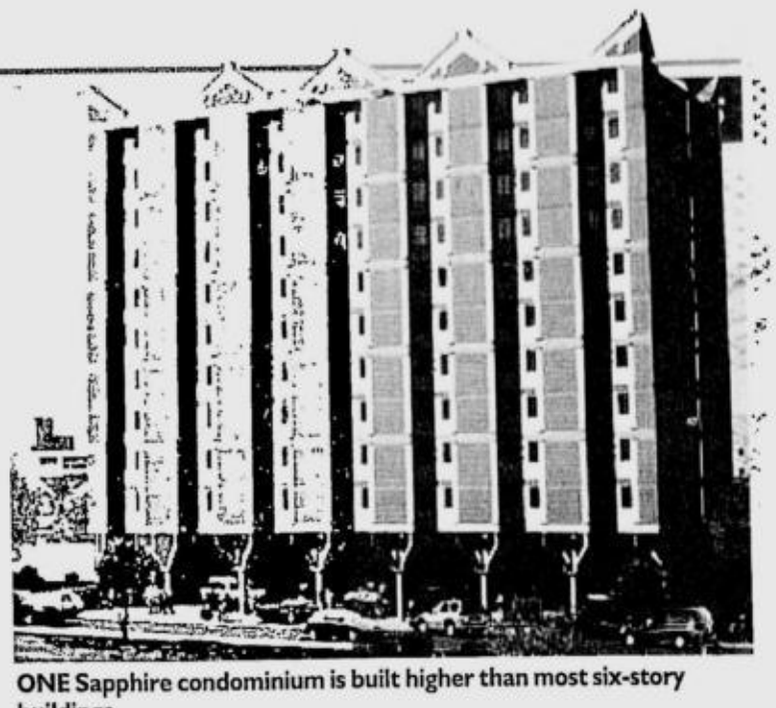
"One Sapphire condominium is a six-story, bi-level condominium offering one- (33.59 sq m), two- (72.32 sq m), and three- (78.87) bedroom units with prices between P1.2 million and P3.7 million," said Audilyn Villaverde, RJ Lhinet marketing assistant.

Villaverde said the price range is within reach of its target market composed mostly of middle-income earners or with family members working abroad.

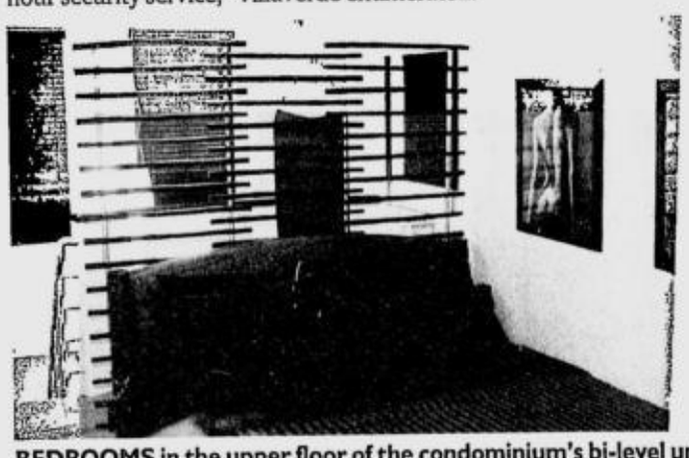
"RJ Lhinet was established to develop affordable yet quality housing and we stand firm in our belief that every family should be given the chance to have their own homes," Villaverde added.

Proof of the company's commitment, Villaverde informed, can be seen in amenities and features offered at One Sapphire.

"The condominium offers four commercial units on the ground level. It also has a grand lobby and reception area, children's playground, swimming pool, snack bar, mini gym, basement parking, elevator, back-up power for common areas, centralized garbage disposal and collection, automatic fire alarm and sprinkler system, underground water tanks and 24-hour security service," Villaverde enumerated.



ONE Sapphire condominium is built higher than most six-story buildings.



BEDROOMS in the upper floor of the condominium's bi-level units are spacious as well as more private.

But what set this condominium apart from most projects would be the unit's bilevel layout.

"As one would notice, the building is built much higher than the regular six-story buildings as we made sure the upper level of each unit has ample floor to ceiling height," Tan explained.

She said that a bi-level layout provides residents more breathing space and gives its owners more interior design options and all-important privacy.

"We placed the bedroom areas on the upper level, separated from the living, dining and kitchen area. This layout enhances privacy. Moreover we also used acoustic-friendly walls and floorings so that the sound coming from downstairs and even those from the neighboring units are much more muted," she added.

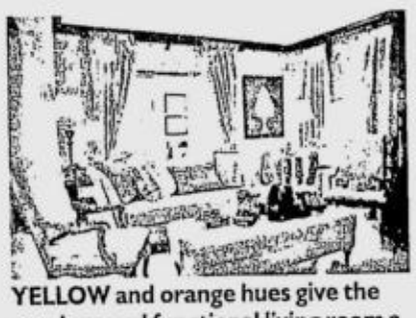
Ponticelli: Italian-inspired enclave developing at full blast

THE COUNTRY'S BIGGEST HOMEbuilder, CrownAsia, unveils six new model homes to lead the full-blast development of its residential community inspired by Italy's picturesque countryside towns—Ponticelli on Daang Hari, Alabang.

With the lure of the famed holiday destination, the community's relaxed lifestyle, and its rich history and culture, residents of Italy call it their Belpaese (meaning beautiful country).

With thorough masterplanning, CrownAsia designed Ponticelli to provide more individuals and families the opportunity to come home to the splendor of Italian countryside living every day.

WARM hues, Italian-inspired architecture create a laidback feel for Lalique.



YELLOW and orange hues give the spacious and functional living room a warm glow.

P1.3B, 18-hectare dev't

Coined from the Italian words *ponti* (meaning bridge) and *celli* (meaning skies), Ponticelli is characterized by beautiful, sloping terrain converging with the serene skies. A P1.3 billion, 18-hectare development, Ponticelli belongs to CrownAsia's roster of masterplanned and themed communities.

Ponticelli on Daang-Hari Road is a quick 5-minute drive from the commercial and business district of Alabang, 40 minutes from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) and just 45 minutes away from Makati via the South Luzon Expressway.

Sophisticated exteriors, practical style, and spacious and functional living areas complement the elegant architecture of each new model home.

The six new models are Tiffany, Murano, Lenox, Llardo, Rosenthal and Roman; with floor areas ranging from 86 to 252 sq m on lots beginning at 110 to as large as 300 sq m. Prices range from P3.2 to P10 million.

The new models are colored with warm hues like yellow, red and green with splashes of orange to bring a comfortable and laidback ambiance like that of Italy's countryside. The soothing colors of the homes are complemented by flower beds and the dense growth of tall trees around the enclave.

'Towns'

The enclave is divided into "towns" or the Villas of Ponticelli, each representing Italy's crops, harvest and famous products: the Villas of Ponticelli, Villa Grissini, Villa Caramella, Villa Polenta, Villa Grappa, Pavia, Genoa, Lavarone and Trento.

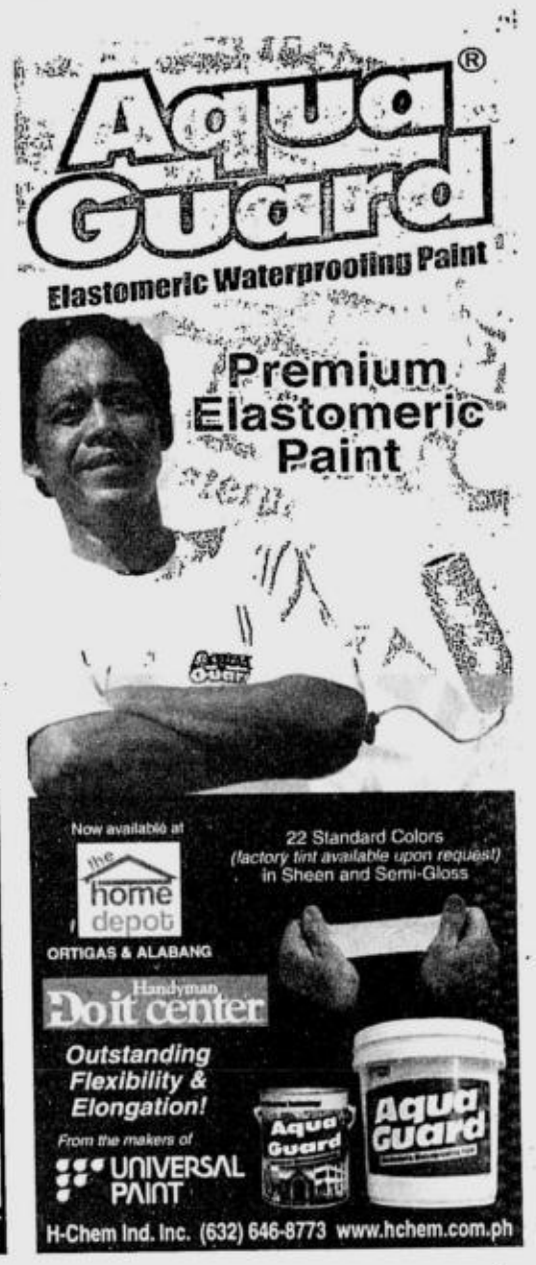
The Villas of Ponticelli are surrounded by roads which lead to the Italian Villages of Ponticelli, which are named after Italian towns famous for the production of great food: Alba di Ponticelli, Asti di Ponticelli, Turin di Ponticelli, Vercelli di Ponticelli, Bergamo di Ponticelli, Lodi di Ponticelli, Mantua di Ponticelli, and Milan di Ponticelli.

Recreational amenities

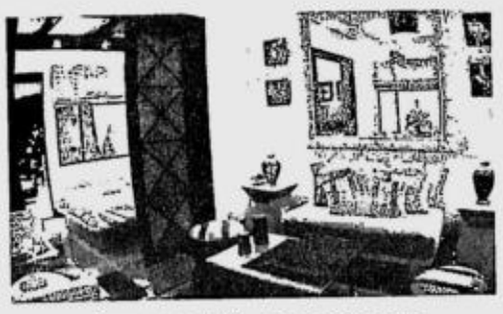
Residents need not go out of their way to unwind and stay physically fit since Ponticelli offers complete recreational amenities such as a clubhouse, swimming pool, sports facilities and children's playground. Nature parks, picnic areas and kitchen-gardens are spread around Ponticelli, while tree-lined pathways are perfect for leisure walks.

The fast development of Ponticelli is another accomplishment to strengthen CrownAsia's 11-year track record as the country's leading residential property developer. Interested parties may call CrownAsia at 873-1614 and 871-8412, or log on to www.crownasia.com.ph.

ELEGANT architecture coupled with practical style is exemplified in the Murano.



Manhattan Garden City introduces new unit layouts



MEGAWORLD studied the needs of its buyers and thus designed corner studio units with balcony.

THE ARANETA CENTER BRINGS BACK childhood memories of fun, shopping and leisure, back in the days when it was the only place to go to for such things. Who could forget the thrills of the rides in Fiesta Carnival, or the shopping sprees at SM and Ali Mall, the local and international concerts and of course, the exciting basketball games over at the Big Dome?

These days, the 35-hectare Araneta Center is at its best, having been breathed a new life in recent years, with the establishment of modern facilities like the Gateway Mall and the MRT-3 and LRT-2 which made it an even better hub for people coming from different places in the metropolis. That's why when Megaworld Corp. and Araneta Center collaborated to build the residential haven of Manhattan Garden City (MGC) in more pristine northeastern side of the property, the timing was not only perfect but it also answered the wishes of many people to live in style in a place with familiar urban conveniences.

True enough, Tower 1 of MGC "sold out like hotcakes" as the cliché goes. With its garden theme right at the heart of a busy city, MGC offered buyers a new kind of lifestyle, being in their own unique exclusive village, but still very much connected with the perks of modern living.

Revised layout

After Tower 1 sold out in record time, Megaworld studied the clients' responses and revised the layouts of the floors for Tower 2. "After hearing the feedback from the clients and studying the possibilities with our designers, we came up with a revised layout which we believe offers the things that buyers are looking for. This just shows our commitment to them—that it is them that we have in mind when designing our properties," said Megaworld Central Properties Inc. president Anthony Charlemagne Yu.

An exciting revision in the floor plan is the introduction of new corner studio units, which have their own balconies, thus giving residents an awesome view of Araneta Center. Tower 2 also offers buyers bigger executive studio units with balcony, with the most spacious one at 40 square meters.

Speaking of more space, new one-bedroom units are introduced as well as the biggest two-bedroom units at almost 79 sq m. These corner two-bedroom units also have balconies of their own completing the suite.

A more affordable unit

Understandably, other than the desire for more space, some clients chose more affordability and Megaworld also answered this need with the introduction of a more affordable but equally attractive two-bedroom unit at almost 54 sq m. Of course, these two-bedroom units also feature airy balconies for the family to enjoy the magnificent views within the Araneta Center.

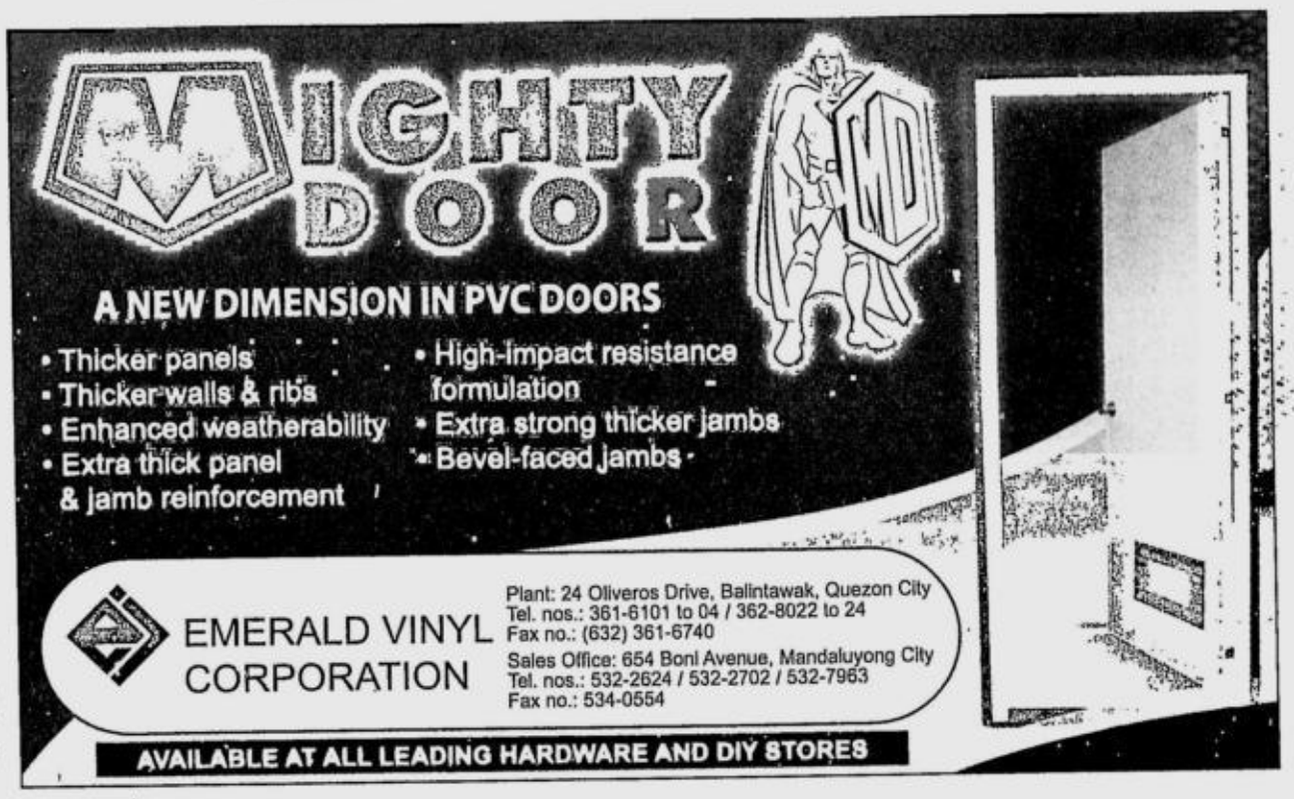
Of course, Tower 2 still offers all the perks and conveniences of Tower 1. The building offers backup power generator, multilevel parking and provisions for Internet and cable TV—all considered basic necessities in this day and age.

Resort-style play area

Residents can of course enjoy the resort-style play area at the podium level of Manhattan Parkway, which features trellised walkways, jogging paths and a fitness station, along with an indoor spa for that much-needed pampering after a day's work. For the sports enthusiast, there are tennis and basketball courts, as well as water play pool and a wading pool for kids.

Faithful to its garden-theme, all footbridges and walkways are flanked by lush pocket gardens and landscaped sitting areas, giving residents a more pleasant and luxurious way to get from one point to another. Indeed, Megaworld has redefined luxury living once more, this time in a familiar place that we have loved over the years.

With Homelite, the revolutionary home loan program from Megaworld and Security Bank, yuppies and starting families will love Manhattan Garden City all the more. The low interest rates and terms up to 25 years to pay make owning a unit very affordable, as low as P10,847 monthly for a studio unit.



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
24/7 CUSTOMER PHILIPPINES, INC. 8/F Insular Life Building, 6781 Ayala Avenue., Makati City	Thomas Don Olsen	Senior Manager-Technology Program Management
INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH FRIENDS CENTER INC. 1101 Pearlbank Center, 146 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Bu Mi Chae (w/o Kim)	Center Chief
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Anoop Prasad Gudipudi	Functional Analyst
DE CASTRO & KANG MANAGEMENT & CONSULTANCY, INC. 2/F T-Tower Bldg., 5040 P. Burgos St., Poblacion, Makati City	Sulan Jung	Financial Consultant
DE CASTRO & KANG MANAGEMENT & CONSULTANCY, INC. 2/F T-Tower Bldg., 5040 P. Burgos St., Poblacion, Makati City	Mi Hwa Lim (w/o Kim)	Korean Language Interpreter 3
ORIENT PEARL SEAFOODS & RESTAURANT 181 10th Ave. cor A. del Mundo St., Caloocan City	Shuke Lin	Cook
NAMDO TRADING CORP. 275 Quirino Highway, Baesa, Quezon City	Kyung Hee Kim	Sales Manager
CJS UNO TRAVEL & TOURS CORP. Unit 5-B Osmeña Building, 1991 A. Mabini St., Malate, Manila	Dong Jin Koh	Manager
BONA FIDE LANGUAGE CENTER CORP. 10/F Common Goal Tower, Finance St., Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Yong Hee Lee	Chairman of the Board / President
CHINA STATE CONSTRUCTION ENG'G. CORP. U3102, Orient Square Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Ave., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Pengxiang He	Executive Secretary
BONA FIDE LANGUAGE CENTER CORP. 10/F Common Goal Tower, Finance St., Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Jungsub Byun	Director / VP & Head Administrator
CHINA STATE CONSTRUCTION ENG'G. CORP. U3102, Orient Square Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Ave., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Guozhi Wang	Technical Manager
CHINA STATE CONSTRUCTION ENG'G. CORP. U3102, Orient Square Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Ave., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Yongcai Wang	Quality Control Manager
CHINA STATE CONSTRUCTION ENG'G. CORP. U3102, Orient Square Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Ave., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Jun Zhang	Project Manager
INTERNATIONAL PLANT DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES, INC. Unit 2501 East Tower Center, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Bungil Choi	Web Design Manager
YDCI TRADING 102-106 Maryland St., Immaculate Concepcion, Cubao, Quezon City	Nobuyuki Jinguji	Product Design Specialist
FOREIGN HOLIDAY PHILIPPINES, INC. 1588 M.H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila	Ying Kay Kwok	Property Maintenance Manager
BMIC TRAVEL & TOURS CORP. North Wings Bldg., F.B. Harrison, Pasay City	Heesun Jung	Field Instructor
VERSATILE INT'L. SERVICES INC. 1870 Becerra St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Ahmed Mohamed Saleh Mohamed Aboualia	General Manager

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-6920.

(PDI–March 3, 2007)

ISABELA – 1 ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Victoria, Alicia, Isabela
Tel. No. (078) 6627103 / 6627983 / 6627810
Fax No. (078) 6627103 / 6627917

The Isabela – 1 Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Iselco – 1) wishes to invite interested suppliers for Public Bididng for the supply and delivery of the following:

Schedule 1 : Pole Line Hardwares
Schedule 2 : Special Equipments
Schedule 3 : Wires and Cables
Schedule 4 : Poles and Crossarms

Interested parties may secure bid documents and checklist of qualification requirements at the office of the PBAC Secretary at Institutional Services Manager's office and look for Ms. Luzviminda D. Torres or call cel no. 09189429720 or call Engr. Romeo M. Villacampa at Cel. No. 09189226973.

The schedule of Bidding activities are as follows:

PARTICULARS	DATE/TIME
Issuance of bid documents/checklist of qualification requirements.	March 5 – March 19, 2007 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Pre-Qualification conference	March 16, 2007 10:00 AM
Submission / Opening of bids	March 20, 2007 / 10:00 AM

Checklist of Qualification Requirements are the following: (To be submitted during the pre-qualification conference)

1. Non-refundable filing fee in the amount of Three thousand pesos only (P3,000.00) in the form of cash.
2. Complete set of legal documents of the company, SEC Registration, Articles of Incorporation and by laws, company profile, business registration and license papers.
3. Audited Financial Statement (Balance sheet and Income Statement) duly filed/stamped received by BIR.
4. If represented by an agent of the firm, it must have a letter of Authorization from the President/Manager or Owner.

The ISELCO – 1 reserves the right to reject any or all bids for valid and justified reason, waive any defect thereon and make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the cooperative (ISELCO – 1). The ISELCO – 1 likewise assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

(Sgd.) **MR. ORLANDO B. RAMIL**
OIC / General Manager

(PDI–March 2 & 3, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Pangasinan State University
2401 Lingayen, Pangasinan
Website: http://www.psu.edu.ph * E-mail: psu-cc1@mozcom.com

NOTICE OF SEARCH AND CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Board of Regents of the Pangasinan State University formally and publicly announces that the Search for Presidency of the **PANGASINAN STATE UNIVERSITY** is now open. Interested applicants and/or nominees are invited to send their formal applications to the Search Committee chaired by Dr. Patricio S. Faylon

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Must be a Natural born Filipino citizen;
- A holder of an earned doctorate degree in any academic field relevant to the mission and mandate of the University;
- Must not be more than 60 years old at the time of application;
- Must have a proven track record as administrator for at least five (5) years preferably in the academe; and
- Morally upright and has no record of criminal, civil and/or administrative conviction.

In addition to the above-mentioned qualifications, the applicants should make a full disclosure of all administrative, criminal, and/or civil cases filed in any court in the Philippines and are required to submit the following clearances:

- National Bureau of Investigation Clearance;
- Sandiganbayan Clearance;
- Civil Service Commission Clearance and/or Certificate of No Pending Administrative Case issued by the Administrative Officer of present employer;
- Certificate of no pending cases issued by the Court where he/she resides;
- Previous Employer's Clearance/s.

Formal application addressed to the Search Committee should be accompanied with:

- Detailed Curriculum Vitae (under oath) and authenticated/certified supporting documents;
- The applicant's proposed Vision and Thrust for the University within a four-year period;
- Result of the Neuro-Psychiatric Examination accomplished by a competent physician of a government accredited Test Center;
- Medical Certificate of Physical Fitness issued by a government physician; and
- Under Oath CSC Form 212.

Interested applicants and/or those nominated for the position are requested to submit eight (8) sets of their formal application and certified supporting documents on or before April 03, 2007 to

MR. MARLON N. FABRICANTE
Executive Assistant IV
Office of Commissioner S. M. OCAMPO, JR.
CHED, 5/f, DAP Bldg., San Miguel Ave.
Ortigas Center, Pasig City
Tel. No. (02) 636-1690
Telefax No. (02) 636-1693

OR

MR. EMERITO J. URBANO
University/Board Secretary
Pangasinan State University
Lingayen, Pangasinan
Tel. No. (075) 542-6467
Telefax No. (075) 542-8694

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
Room 508, 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City
Direct Line: 636-6543 / Telefax: 636-6542 • Trunk Line: 632-1361 local 2115 • Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph

2007 Call for Submission of Elementary Mathematics, Science and Health, and English Textbooks and Teacher's Manuals

The Department of Education (DepEd) is inviting interested publishers to submit copies of camera-ready materials for their textbooks (TXs) and accompanying teacher's manuals (TMs) for Mathematics Grades 1 to 6, Science and Health Grades 3 to 6, and English Grade 5 intended for use in public schools nationwide starting 2008-2009.

DepEd intends to buy the best sets of textbooks and teacher's manuals that pass content evaluation with a reasonable price offer for the copyright authorization fee to print and distribute to all public schools nationwide.

All submitted materials will undergo an evaluation process in four areas:

- Area 1 to test completeness of coverage, organization, and internal consistency;
- Area 2 to check accuracy of facts and information, integrity of concepts, and sequence of learning concepts;
- Area 3 to test the appropriateness of the language and visuals used; and
- Area 4 to ensure correct grammar and syntax and check book design

Publishers will pay an evaluation fee of forty thousand pesos (P40, 000) for each set of textbook and teacher's manual to be evaluated. The evaluation fees, which will be used to defray expenses for service fees, transportation, and board and lodging of evaluators, may be paid either in cash or manager's check payable to DepEd Trust Account for Textbook Evaluation (Account No. LBP 0672-1027-66).

Only sets of TXs/TMs that meet the cut-off score after undergoing content evaluation under the four areas will be considered for ranking. Publishers will be given a copy of the recommendation of the evaluators at the different areas, which will serve as basis for revising the TXs/TMs prior to submission for bidding.

The materials for elementary Mathematics Grades 1 to 6, Science and Health Grades 3-6, and English Grade 5 must be submitted to the DepEd-Procurement Service (DepEd-PS), 5th Floor, Mabini Building, DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City not later that **July 31, 2007.**

In order to get a soft copy of the Textbook Call Guidelines and learning competencies for elementary Math and English, bring a blank compact disk to the DepEd-Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS) starting **March 5, 2007**. Soft copies of the latest learning competencies for elementary Science and Health will be available after **March 30, 2007**. All inquiries pertaining to this call may be addressed to DepEd-IMCS Evaluation and Training Division staff at tel. nos. (02) 634-1054 or 631-9294.

For your information and guidance.

(Sgd.) Ramon C. Bacani
Undersecretary and BAC Chairman

(PDI – March 3 & 10, 2007)

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Room 507-508, 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines
http://www.deped.gov.ph, deped_procurementservice@yahoo.com
Direct Line: 636-65-42 / Telefax: 636-65-43 Trunk Line: 632-13-61 Locals: 2085/2115

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Health and Nutrition Center (HNC) through the Department of Education - Bids and Awards Committee (DepED-BAC) invites eligible bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Supply and Delivery to the DepED District Offices of the following items:

Package No.	Package Description	Minimum Quantity (in packs)	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) per Package	Bid Submission deadline/Opening of Bids	End user
I	Fortified Instant Noodles	30,876,960 packs	P 134,932,320.00	March 27, 2007 2:00 p.m. Venue: Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal I Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City	Health and Nutrition Center
II	Powdered Full Cream Milk	24,224,760 packs	P 121,123,800.00		
	TOTAL>>>		P 256,056,120.00		

Bidders shall offer the maximum or the most number of quantities for the respective amount of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC). Bids received in excess of the ABC of each package will be rejected at bid opening. Bidders may bid for any or both of the Packages. Late bids shall be rejected.

The DepED will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all eligible bidders on March 13, 2007, 2:00 p.m. at Health and Nutrition Center (HNC) Conference Room, Rm. 511-B 5th Flr., Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Ave., Pasig City.

The Bidding Documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat, Procurement Service, Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, starting March 5, 2007 upon payment of the non-refundable fee in the amount of Philippine Pesos Five Thousand and 00/100 only (Php5,000.00)

Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with procedures in R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Information is also available at http://www.deped.gov.ph or www.procurementservice.org or call DepED-PS at Telephone Nos. 633-93-43 / 636-65-42 or Fax No. 636-65-43.

DepED-BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to annul the bidding process, or declare failure of bidding at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected parties

(Sgd.) RAMON C. BACANI
Undersecretary and BAC Chairperson

(PDI–March 3, 2007)

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- Excellent communication
- Belong to top 20% of the graduating class

Interested applicants may directly apply and / or submit their resume to the address indicated below:

Wistron InfoComm (Philippines), Corporation
Human Resources Department
#4 Rizal Hi-way corner Am High Avenue
Subic Bay Industrial Park, Subic Bay Freeport Zone
Telephone No. (047) 252-77-40 ; Fascimile (047) 2526223

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Office of the Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)
Bldg. 255, Rm 223 Barryman Road, Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Philippines 2222
☎ (047) 252-4713 / 4483 • Fax No. (047) 252-4472

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

Republic of the Philippines
SBMA LANDSCAPING WORKS AND REHABILITATION / MAINTENANCE PROJECT
Subic Bay Freeport Zone

Project Description / Scope of Works:

The Works shall include provision of labor, materials, equipment and other incidentals to complete the landscaping works (site preparations, planting works, grassing works, and others) of designated public spaces within Subic Bay Freeport Zone; and rehabilitation / restoration and maintenance of existing turf and garden.

1. The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) through its Corporate Budget for 2007 intends to apply the sum of **Nine Million Pesos (PhP 9 Million)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **SBMA Landscaping Works and Rehabilitation / Maintenance Project.** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The SBMA now calls for the submission of **Letters of Intent (LOIs) and Application for Eligibility** from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the SBMA Landscaping Works and Rehabilitation / Maintenance Project. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids.
3. All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).
4. Information on BAC activities is as follows:

Item No.	BAC Activities	Schedule	Venue
1.	Receipt from prospective bidders of LOIs including Application for Eligibility and Issuance of Eligibility Forms	March 12 & 13, 2007; 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	BAC Chairman c/o Engineering Department, Room 223, Bldg. 255, Barryman Road, Subic Bay Freeport Zone (SBFZ)
2.	Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	March 16, 2007; 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	BAC Secretariat, Room 203, Bldg. 255, Barryman Road, SBFZ
3.	Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	March 26, 2007; 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Same addres on Item 2
4.	Issuance of Bid Documents	March 26, 2007 – April 1, 2007 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM; April 2, 2007 8:00 AM - 12 PM	Same address on Item 1
5.	Pre-bid Conference	April 2, 2007; 2:00 PM	PPMD Conference Room, Bldg., 255, Barryman Road, SBFZ
6.	Receipt and Opening of Bids	April 17, 2007; 2:00 PM	Same address on Item 5

5. The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at the above address upon their submission of a LOI and Application for Eligibility, and upon their payment of a non-refundable fee of **Two Thousand Pesos (Php 2,000.00).**
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon presentation of the Notice of Eligibility and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00).**
7. Relevant Requirement: Minimum PCAB Registration and Classification/ License:
   General Building
   GB-4 Park, Playground or Recreational Work
   Small B
8. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of cash, certified check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit (1% of ABC), or bank guarantee (1.5% of ABC) or surety bond (2.5% of ABC). Late Bids shall not be accepted.
9. Completion of the Works is required by **One Hundred Fifty (150 calendar days)** from the date stated in the Notice to Proceed.
10. The SBMA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, in accordance with the provisions of RA 9184 without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) ATTY. RAMON O. AGREGADO
BAC Chairman/SDA for Support Services

(PDI – March 3, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills
City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Securities and Exchange Commission, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites interested authorized dealer/distributor to bid for the supply and delivery to designated SEC Extension Offices of Seven (7) units Asian Utility Vehicle, 2.5 Direct Injection Diesel Engine with manual transmission.

The Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid is Php 5,880,000.00

Source of Funding: Unprogrammed Fund R.A. No. 9336

A complete set of bidding documents may be obtained by the eligible bidder starting **March 5, 2007** at the General Services Division, 4th floor, SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City. For further details, please contact Mr. Norlan M. De las Alas at Tel. No. 727-3320.

Pre-Bid conference will be on **March 9, 2007, 1:30 P.M.** at the Non-Traditional Securities and Instruments Department (NTD) Conference Room, 10th Floor, SEC Building.

Deadline for submission and opening of bids will be on **March 21, 2007, 1:30 P.M.** at the General Services Division, 4th floor, SEC Building and immediately thereafter, opening of bids will be held at the Hearing Room No. 2, Compliance and Enforcement Department (CED) 5th floor, SEC Building. Bids submitted after 1:30 P.M. will no longer be accepted.

Republic Act 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) shall govern all particulars relative to Eligibility, Bid Bond, Pre-Bid Conference, Bid Evaluation, Post Qualification and Awards of Contracts.

The SEC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any required formalities therein and to award the contract to the bidder whose proposal as evaluated is most advantageous to the Commission.

SEC also assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that any award will be made.

(Sgd.) JOSE AQUINO
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – March 3, 2007)

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Republic of the Philippines
Province of Sultan Kudarat
Municipality of Kalamansig

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

**CONSTRUCTION OF KALAMANSIG
10 MT ICE PLANT AND COLD STORAGE**

1. The Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank towards the cost of the Mindanao Basic Urban Services Sector Project (MBUSSP), and it intends to apply part or the whole of the proceeds of this loan together with the GOP counterpart funds, to payment under the contract for the **Construction of Kalamansig 10-metric ton Ice Plant and Cold Storage.**
2. The **Municipality of Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat** now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the **Construction of Kalamansig 10-metric ton Ice Plant and Cold Storage.** The works include Architectural, Structural, Plumbing, Electrical and Mechanical with supply and installation of Ice-Making Equipment.
3. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with relevant procedures for open competitive bidding as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," to the extent it is consistent with Asian Development Bank's procurement procedures and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries as defined in "Guidelines for Procurement Under Asian Development Bank Loans".
4. The documents required in the Eligibility Documents shall be submitted as part of the Technical Documents of the Bidders as provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the **Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), Municipality of Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat** at the address given below from ***9:00 AM*** to ***5:00 PM, March 4, 2007*** to ***April 2, 2007.***
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of *Php 15,000.00.* **The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative.**
7. The **BAC, Municipality of Kalamansig** will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on March 19, 2007 at the Municipal Hall, Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat.
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before **April 3, 2007 @** 12:00 noon. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of *Manager's Check/ Cashier's Check or Bank Guarantee* in an amount of Php 550,000.00 or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on **April 3, 2007 @** 1:00 PM at the Municipal Hall, Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. To be considered eligible and qualified, a Bidder must:
   a. have a successful experience as prime contractor in the construction of at least one (1) work of a nature and complexity equivalent to the Works in the last five (5) years (2002-2006), such being verifiable from completion certificates. To comply with this requirement the single contract cited should be at least Php 17,600,000.00.
   b. have a minimum average annual construction turnover over the last three (3) (2004-2006) years equal to Php 22,000,000.00.
   c. submit audited balance sheets or, if not required by the law of the applicants country, other financial statements acceptable to the Procuring Entity, for the last three (3) (2003-2005) years to demonstrate the current soundness of the applicants financial position and its prospective long-term profitability.
10. Completion of the Works is required within 225 calendar days.
11. The **Municipality of Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat** reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

**BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Attn: NELIA P. ALFECHE
BAC Chairman
Municipal Budget Office
Municipality of Kalamansig
Province of Sultan Kudarat
Cell No. 09206054229
Tel No. 064-2046204**

(Sgd.) **NELIA P. ALFECHE**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – March 3, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PANGASINAN DIVISION II
Canarvacanan, Binalonan, Pangasinan, Philippines
Tel. # 075-5622650, Fax 075-5624508

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education, Pangasinan Division II, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers / manufacturers / distributors / contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

LOT	NAME OF CONTRACT	LOCATION	Approved Budget for the Contract	Contract Duration
A	Supply and Delivery of School Furniture CY 2006	4th District	Php 1,158,000.00	90 CD
B	Supply and Delivery of School Furniture CY 2006	5th District	Php 3,046,000.00	90 CD
C	Supply and Delivery of School Furniture CY 2006	6th District	Php 3,313,000.00	90 CD

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184 known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interests or outstanding capital stocks belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II, Instruction to Bidders of the Bidding Documents.

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

Activity	Date	Venue
1. Issuance of Bidding Documents	February 28-March 6, 2007	Physical Facilities Office
2. Pre-bid Conference	March 7, 2007 @ 2:00 PM	Division Function Room
3. Deadline of Submission of Bids	March 19, 2007 @ 2:00 PM	Division Function Room
4. Opening of Bids	March 19, 2007 @ 2:00 PM	Division Function Room

Bid Documents will be available only to **prospective bidders** upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Php3,000.00** to the **DepED Pangasinan Division II** Cashier.

The **DepED Pangasinan Division II**, reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) **DONATO D. BALDERAS, JR.**
BAC Chairperson

(PDI--March 3, 2007)

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(Apply only after March 15, 2007)

Please contact: Administrative Office,
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Telephone Nos. 7356392 / 7356393 / 7356395
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(PDI – March 3, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV
LICENSE FOR LOCAL PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY
[ ] New [x] Renewal

**PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY
OPERATOR'S LICENSE NO. IVA-RIZ-07-02-01**

By authority vested in me by the Labor Code and the Omnibus Rules Implementing the Code and payment of the license fee in the amount of SIX THOUSAND PESOS (P6,000.00) ONLY having been made as per Official Receipt Number 9292931 and posting in the appropriate Cash and Surety Bond of P 25,000.00 and P 100,000.00 respectively, having been complied with, this LICENSE is hereby GRANTED to MR. **ALFREDO A. CAYETANO** to establish, direct and/or manage the

SIGRA SERVICES, INC.
28 General Luna St., Ampid II, San Mateo, Rizal

This license which expires on February 13, 2009 is valid in the Philippines. Transfer or use of by any other person or entity tenders this license null and void.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Official Seal of the Regional Office No. IV Department of Labor and Employment, to be affixed at the Calamba, Laguna, Philippines, this 14th day of February 2007.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. RICARDO S. MARTINEZ, SR. CESO III**
Regional Director

(PDI – March 3, 2007)

OBITUARIES

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

PATRICIO CASTRO SOLIMAN

Peacefully joined his Creator on March 1, 2007 at the age of 91.

**Esteemed Educator and Former Principal,
Lourdes School Mandaluyong**

Devoted husband of **Honorata Diaz**, loving father of **Lina** and **Ed Plantilla, Perla** and **Nap Cadiente, Hec** and **Dinky Juliano, Rody** and **Teni Tenmatay**. Family and friends request prayers for the repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Marikina City.

Funeral Mass is scheduled on Monday, March 5 at 9:00 a.m. Interment follows.

"Blessed are the **PEACEMAKERS**, *for they shall be called children of God."*
Matthew 5:9

Remembering a Soldier and a Gentleman...

BRIG. GEN. OSCAR M. FLORENDO

who passed away on March 4, 1990.

Schedule of Masses

Saturday, March 3rd
Baguio Cathedral .... 7:00 A.M.
Transfiguration of Christ Parish, *Antipolo City* .... 6:00 P.M.

Sunday, March 4th
St. Ignatius Cathedral, *Camp Aguinaldo* .... 6:00 A.M./12:00 NN
Camp Crame Chapel .... 7:00 A.M./6:00 P.M.
EDSA Shrine .... 7:00A.M./11:00 A.M.
Baguio Cathedral .... 7:00 A.M.
Church of the Risen Christ, ... 7:00 A.M
Nayong Silangan, Antipolo City
Santuario de San Jose, *Greenhills* .... 11:15 A.M./12:15 NN
Transfiguration of Christ Parish, *Antipolo City* .... 5:00 P.M.

The family requests friends and relatives to remember "**Oca**" in their prayers.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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9129008-11 • Fax 9129011
SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City
6350219 • 6872354 • 6872366 • Fax 6350220
G/F Trinity Bldg., 636 T.M. Kalaw St., Manila
5273342 • 5280183 • 5276357 • Fax 5280213

CONRADO "ADING" A. TABUENA

September 10, 1933 – March 1, 2007

His bereaved wife **Noning**; children **Dingdong & Abby, Osky & Nene, Lorna & Tony, Brenda & Jack, Ludette & Frankie**; grandchildren, brothers & sisters & in-laws, nephews, nieces, relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His cremated remains lie in state at Yakal Room, La Funeraria Paz – Sucat, Parañaque (inside Manila Memorial Park) until midnight of Sunday, March 4, 2007.

MESSAGE OF THANKS

Our grief is filled with joy as we stood witness on how God's light guided **LOURDES C. SANIEL** on her final journey, Josefa, Luisa, Sr. Tentai; Mike and Severa Saniel Socco, Vince, Ria, Nolet Socco; Tato and Thess Socco, Celina, Carlo, JM; Louie and Ana Socco Medrano, Kelly Ann, THANK YOU for your presence and prayers.

MESSAGE OF THANKS

We, the family of the late

VIRGILIO GARIBAY SALDAJENO

January 31, 1930 - February 20, 2007

wish to express our sincerest appreciation to all who spent time with us at his wake, attended his funeral, sent flowers and spiritual bouquets, and in countless ways, condoled us in our sorrow.

We are deeply grateful.

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

SCIENCE/HEALTH

Text us your feedback: inquirer hea name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Battling the bulge to avoid deadly complications

By Charles E. Buban

UNIT LP06 in the lower penthouse (21st) level of the Medical Plaza Makati is no ordinary clinic.

Walk inside and one will find that the seats are unusually wide and sturdy built. An extra-large hospital bed lies in one corner while a special weighing scale stands near the center of the room. It's special because it could measure up to 400 kilos.

"People who come here are worried about their physical appearance. The rolls of surplus flesh, the tight waistband, not being able to see their own feet are just some of the things they would discuss. A lot of them have tried following a fad diet, took slimming drugs or natural products; some even had liposuction just to be more shapely again and still they failed," says Bom Chan, obesity solutions head of the Bib and Lap-Band Center that occupies the unit.

ANA Poco always reminds the center's patients that the 22.5 kg (50 lb) she lost would be for naught if she has not committed to a new (healthy) lifestyle and eating habits after the surgical procedure.

Chan explains that while it offers free info session, free patient info seminar and private consultations, the center also provides access to some of the country's top surgeons who may be able to solve the patient's problem more effectively and permanently.

Health consequences

"This center always remind its patients that more than the physical appearance, they should be more worried about the health consequences should they remain way over their ideal weight," Chan says.

Dr. Ferdinand Samonte, a general and cosmetic surgeon as well as a laparoscopic bariatric surgeon, explains that although being overweight and obese may cause several psychological problems like a feeling of inferiority (often caused by discrimination), having extra kilos is attributed to a number of mild to serious health problems including difficulties in breathing, pain in the knees and back as well as noninsulin-dependent diabetes and some types of cancer.

"More alarming is that individuals suffering from obesity are more likely to have high blood pressure and diseases related to hardening of the arteries, which all play in the development of stroke and heart disease," Samonte informs.

The doctor says the center could offer its patients ways on how to safely, effectively and hopefully permanently lose weight, which eventually will lead to an improvement of health.

Lap-Band

The Lap-Band adjustable gastric banding is one of these methods being offered at the center. This minimally invasive procedure uses a surgically implanted device, consisting of a hollow silicone band, tubing and an access port.

The band is placed around the upper part of the stomach to create a small pouch that can hold only a small amount of food.

"The narrowed opening created by the band controls how quickly food passes from the newly created stomach pouch to the rest of the stomach. The system helps the patient eat less by limiting the amount of food that can be eaten at one time and at the same time, increasing the time it takes for food to be digested," Samonte explains.

Root cause

Chan adds that the Bib and Lap-Band Center addresses the root cause of size and weight problem.

"While being overweight or obese can run in families, eating habits as well as having a sedentary lifestyle may play a big role. As lives become busier, more and more people eat at restaurants, grab takeout food, or buy quick foods that contain more salts and fats. Since a lot of people are also much less active today, no thanks to televisions, computers and video games filling their spare time, as well as escalators or cars that now tempt individuals to walk or bike less to get somewhere, fats accumulates much easier in the body," he says.

Samonte adds that to tell if one is way over his or her ideal weight the body mass index is often used.

"A BMI is one of the most popular methods of determining whether one is overweight or obese. It is calculated by dividing a person's weight (in kilograms) by his or her height (in meters, squared) or by multiplying weight (in pounds) by 705, then dividing by height (in inches) twice. An overweight person has a BMI of 25 or more, obese if it's already 30 or more, and severe obese if it's already 40 or more," he says.

Over 250,000

Samonte, who pioneered Lap-Band surgery in the Philippines (he first performed it at the De los Santos Medical Center in Quezon City in 2004), said Lap-Band is fast becoming the weight loss surgery of choice in the world with over 250,000 individuals successfully availing the procedure.

"The procedure, which is the only one approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration, involves no cutting, stapling or stomach rerouting. Thus, the procedure is less traumatic and in fact, the patient could eventually resume his or her normal activities within a week, which is much quicker compare to other surgical alternatives," he explains.

Samonte cites one of his patients, Ana Poco, who is among those who first availed of the procedure.

"At 5 feet and one inch, Ms Poco used to weigh 86 kg (190 pounds), which for her height, is way too much. Two years after undergoing the procedure, she now weighs just 63.5 kg (140 lb) and maintains this by practicing a healthy diet regimen as well as regular exercise," Samonte reports.

He says that Poco, whom the center invites as resource person from time to time, is only successful because she complemented the procedure by practicing a healthy lifestyle.

"I always remind my patients that the amount of weight one could lose depends both on the procedure employed and the individual's motivation and commitment to a new lifestyle and eating habits," Samonte says.

Health risks of having extra kilos

DR. FERDINAND SAMONTE who is one of the country's leading bariatric surgeons (those who specialize in a group of weight-loss surgery procedures designed to treat only obese patients) reminds that the primary concern of overweight or obese individuals should be one of health and not appearance.

"A weight loss, as modest as 5 to 15 percent of total body weight in a person who is overweight or obese, reduces the risk factors for some diseases, particularly heart disease, lower blood pressure, lower blood sugar, and improved cholesterol levels," he says.

Samonte adds that the following could be the consequences if excess weight is not addressed:

- **Premature death**—Individuals who are obese have a 50 to 100 percent increased risk of premature death from all causes, compared to individuals with a healthy weight.
- **Heart disease**—The incidence of heart attack, congestive heart failure, sudden cardiac death, angina or chest pain, and abnormal heart rhythm is increased in persons who are overweight or obese.
- **Diabetes**—A weight gain of 5 to 8 kg increases a person's risk of developing type 2 diabetes to twice that of individuals who have not gained weight.
- **Cancer**—Overweight and obesity are associated with an increased risk for some types of cancer including endometrial (cancer of the lining of the uterus), colon, gall bladder, prostate, kidney and postmenopausal breast cancer.
- **Breathing problems**—Sleep apnea or interrupted breathing while sleeping is more common in obese persons.
- **Arthritis**—For every one kilo increase in weight, the risk of developing arthritis is increased by 9 to 13 percent. *Charles Buban*

I love her no matter what. I guide her in every way possible.

Today's young generation can acquire a virus that can lead to cervical cancer. G.U.A.R.D. against it.

Gather information. Millions of young women may acquire a virus they don't even know about. It's called Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and certain types can cause cervical cancer.[1,2] Find out more. Call hotline numbers 878-6338 or 1-800-1-888-6737 or visit www.msdbeonguard.com for inquiries.

Understand the risks for acquiring the HPV infection that can lead to cervical cancer and be in a better position to discuss the disease with your daughter.

Acknowledge the truth. In the Philippines, cervical cancer was the second leading cause of cancer death in women in 2004.[3] In 2005, 7,277 new cases and 3,807 deaths due to cervical cancer were estimated to have occurred (approximately 10 Filipino women deaths each day due to cervical cancer).[3]

Reach out to other mothers. You can help prevent the development of cervical cancer or better yet help protect other people's daughters by spreading this information.

Discuss prevention. Your Ob-Gynecologist or your daughter's Pediatrician can discuss ways to help prevent cervical cancer.

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MOMS ON G.U.A.R.D.
AGAINST CERVICAL CANCER

A Health Information Program of MSD

11-2007-GRD-06-PH-5013-AD

54% of public schoolchildren afflicted with worms

By Tessa R. Salazar

FIFTY-FOUR PERCENT OF THE country's elementary public schoolchildren are afflicted with worms. This is according to the UP National Institutes of Health 2006 survey in six provinces.

The study involves 3,373 children studying in public schools in Bulacan, Camarines Sur, Negros Occidental, Leyte, Compostela Valley and Surigao del Norte. One area in Negros Occidental showed an infection rate of 91 percent.

One out of five children examined had heavy intensity infection. Heavy intensity infection could mean a child is passing out at least 10 million eggs per day. If the children happen to use an open toilet, they could be spreading billions, even trillions, of parasite eggs.

The 2006 study also involved the Department of Health (DoH), Department of Education (Dep-Ed) and United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef).

A nationwide study covering all regions of the Philippines two years ago showed a 7 out of 10 infestation rate among preschoolers.

Chronic worm infections among children lead to abdominal pain, malnutrition, loss of concentration, poor school performance, absenteeism, low productivity and other complications that doctors warn could end up in a compromised future.

Deworming drugs

"Even with investments such as deworming drugs, four of the six provinces receiving free drugs were not showing remarkable results. Deworming drugs may not have been given to the children. These drugs may have been just stocked inside the health centers," says Dr. Vicente Y. Belizario, a parasitologist from the UP National Institutes of Health and College of Public Health of the University of the Philippines.

Belizario says that what is striking is that the deworming drugs are free but the infection rate is still high.

He adds that the drugs should be distributed by the teachers to the children.

"That is the best technology available: school teachers delivering the treatment," Belizario says.

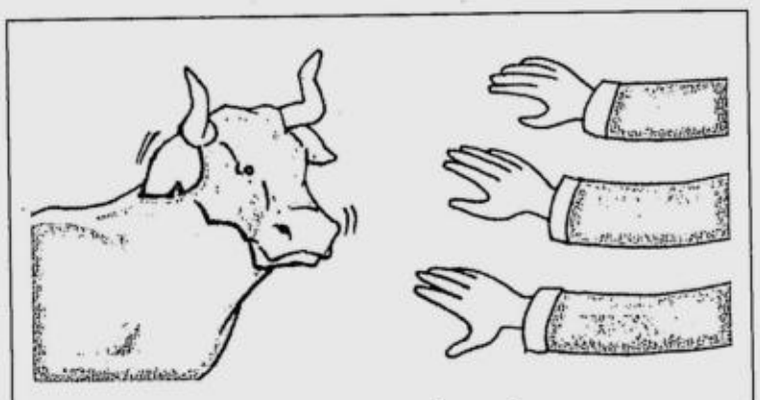
Schistosomiasis' resurgence

Another issue that the UP team finds alarming is the resurgence of schistosomiasis.

Belizario concludes that the main factor for this resurgence is neglect. Infection rates, especially in Agusan del Sur, are significantly high.

"There is an office at the World Health Organization that deals with neglected diseases. There is no such office yet in the Philippines, but in case there will be one, these diseases belong to that office," Belizario says.

Dr. Lulu Bravo, vice chancellor and executive director of the UP National Institutes of Health in Manila urges all health missions to be accompanied by deworming and vaccination programs.



LMO regulations in other countries

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

TWO WEEKS AGO, I ERRONEOUSLY noted that the data taken from the journal Theriogenology came from a conference on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) that took place last Dec. 15. While it is correct that the data from any papers which appeared in Theriogenology—including the regulatory information noted in this particular column—really are sourced from the Jan. 1 issue of that journal, the papers were a precursor to the International Embryo Transfer Society (IETS) conference held in Kyoto, Japan last Jan. 6-10, 2007. I apologize for not catching that earlier.

This year's IETS conference, the first held in Asia, discussed new techniques in human and animal embryo development. In the decade since Dolly the sheep first came onto the scene, it has become difficult to disassociate animal embryo development from the thought of possible genetic modifications. As theriogenology is defined as the study of animal reproduction, having conference attendees submit papers about living modified organisms (LMOs) and international regulations governing them such as the Cartagena protocol to the journal of the same name is a logical move.

Returning then to the Cartagena protocol and its guidelines on LMO transboundary movements, it is worth noting that Japan accepted the protocol back in 2004. As a direct result of this move, existing guidelines were changed and LMO regulation became the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) if the experiments were conducted for research purposes. Otherwise, regulating LMOs applied to field use became the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF).

Select committee

The MAFF has also formed a select committee—the AFFRC—to develop guidelines for risk assessment and risk management when considering the potential environmental effects of any transgenic organisms raised in uncontrolled (nonlab) conditions. The AFFRC believes in the power of information; the more they have on file regarding the LMOs out in the field, the better equipped they are to consider the possible threat of wild type and altered genes combining to form something that could become part of the food chain and decide on the course of action to take in such an event.

In contrast to both Japan and the Philippines, though Canada signed the Cartagena protocol several years ago, the document has yet to be ratified. All three countries believe in detailed reports in order to more thoroughly consider the possible risks associated with using LMOs in the lab and out of it. When it comes to LMO regulation however, Environment Canada and Health Canada make the environmental assessments, though the latter also handles product assessment when the LMOs appear on the consumer market.

Third agency

Still a third agency, the CFIA, looks at the health of the transgenic animals themselves, and their feed. Risk assessment, it seems, is overseen from practically the moment the transgenic animal is born, and it never lets up. The regulatory bodies seem more bureaucratic than the others, but without actual case studies, one cannot compare the results achieved based on each country's approach to regulating LMOs.

All along, there were plans to discuss four countries, not three. However, the United States, despite being one of the instrumental forces in organizing the event, is not a member of the Convention on Biological Diversity and cannot sign the Cartagena protocol, though it does have observer status during protocol meetings. And yet, given that this all began with a discussion on prion-free cattle developed there, it is inconceivable that the United States would not have regulations of their own to impose on LMOs. Next week: a discussion of the US Food and Drug Administration's regulatory approach and (finally) the conclusion to this series of sorts.

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

Vaccines are not just for kids

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

(First of two parts)

VACCINATIONS ARE ONLY FOR KIDS, RIGHT? Wrong. True, childhood immunization saves about three million lives worldwide. As parents, we bring our kids to the doctor to get their shots, but as grown-ups many of us think we don't need any vaccinations at all.

"Adults are as vulnerable to serious diseases as children, sometimes even more so," says Dr. Julie Ann Chua-Lipayon, my former student and now the chief finance officer of the clinic Immunizers. "The older we get, the more likely our immune systems are weaker, because of co-existing diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and asthma. These put us at risk for potentially life-threatening illnesses that may be prevented by vaccines."

How do vaccines work?

When we get an infection, our body reacts by producing substances called antibodies, which fight the invaders. Even after the disease is gone, the antibodies stay in our system and protect us from getting the same disease again. In short, we have become immune.

Vaccinations work by using our immune system to fight disease. By making the body think it is being invaded by disease, our body produces antibodies without experiencing the disease and risking its consequences.

Are vaccines perfect?

Modern vaccines are very effective but not perfect. For example, when we say that a vaccine is 90 percent effective, it means that one in every 10 people vaccinated is not protected from the disease.

If a disease spreads through a community, those who are likely to be infected include those who were not vaccinated and the 10 percent of people who were vaccinated but in whom the vaccine did not work.

Are vaccines safe?

As with all medicines, vaccines carry some risk, but most researchers and public health officials say that serious side effects are extremely rare. The chance of serious complications from the diseases that vaccines prevent is many times higher than the risk of complications related to vaccines.

Take a look at the following table, provided by Immunizers from their research:

Does MMR cause autism?

An early study, which has now been shown to have serious errors in research methods, suggested that there might be some link between MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine and autism. However, other studies using different methods have concluded that there is no evidence for this. The Institute of Medicine, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the British health authorities have concluded that the MMR vaccine does not cause autism among the population as a whole.

Take a look at the facts. According to WHO, measles kills around 772,000 children each year in Africa and Asia. With measles, the risk of pneumonia is 1 in 10, brain fever 1 in 2,000 and death 1 in 3,000. Mumps killed 200,000 children per year before the vaccine became available. Now 3,000 to 5,000 children die from it. With mumps, the chance of brain fever is 1 in 300, deafness 1 in 20,000 and death, 1 in 3,000 to 1 in 10,000. Rubella killed 1.2 million people from 1964 to 1965, and accounted for 11,250 abortions and 20,000 cases of nervous system disorders.

What about taking the MMR vaccine? The risk of severe allergic reaction is less than 1 in one million. The rubella component in the vaccine has a risk of arthritis (usually temporary) of up to 1 in 4, usually in teenage or adult women.

You can contact Immunizers Clinic at telefax 744-5552 to 53, e-mail at info@immunizers.net, or visit the site www.immunizers.com.ph.

(To be concluded next week)

* * *

Queena N. Lee-Chua is a professor of mathematics and psychology at the Ateneo de Manila University. Contact her at blessbook@yahoo.com.

Risks of serious complications

Risk of Serious Complications From the Disease (Without Vaccination)

Polio
Polio kills approximately 2,000 children each year in Africa and Asia.
Permanent paralysis: 1 in 100
Death: 1 in 20 children and 1 in 4 adults with paralytic polio

Tetanus
Tetanus kills approximately 311,000 children each year in Africa and Asia
Death: 1 in 3

Hepatitis B
Hepatitis B kills about 900,000 people each year worldwide.

Chickenpox
Chickenpox causes 50 to 100 deaths per year in the US< mostly in healthy children and adults.
Complications: bacterial infection of skin lesions and scarring, pneumonia, and herpes zoster (shingles) in later life.

Risk of Serious Complications From the Vaccine

Oral Polio Vaccine
Permanent paralysis: 1 in 2.5 million doses
Inactivated polio vaccine: no known associations between this vaccine and serious bad effects

DTP Vaccine - Tetanus
Inflammation of the nerves: 1 in 100,000
Severe allergic reaction: 1 in 1 million

Hepatitis B Vaccine
Severe allergic reaction: 1 in 600,000

Chickenpox Vaccine
Seizure caused by fever: less than 1 in 1,000
Pneumonia: very rare

InquirerGraphics: Louie Bacani

Eat right to lick mood swings and depression

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

I HAVE AN ACQUAINTANCE WHO HAS YET to conquer her markedly labile moods, and her mood swings get her and a lot of people into trouble. So her friends and family usually just get out of the way when she's in one of her psychological and emotional roller-coaster.

Because of her crazy, hectic schedule, her eating schedule is irregular and her choice of what she eats and drinks is not at all healthy, more for convenience rather than nutrition. And her unhealthy eating habits are certainly not helping her psychological problems. My good friend Sanirose S. Orbeta, MS, RD, FADA, a well-respected clinical and sports nutritionist in the country, believes that there might be a strong correlation between nutrition, eating patterns and depression. Wrong diet will exacerbate depression, but the proper diet can help temper its devastating effects.

Dietary recommendations

Sanirose, who also writes a column for Health & Lifestyle magazine, gives the following dietary recommendations for people with undue stress and depression:

• Eat at regular meal times, and make an effort to eat with the family or with someone to get your mind off your "shrinking world." If you have no appetite for three large meals, try spreading your calories through five or six small meals throughout the day.

• Make meals social occasions. Participate in the events of the other people's days. Eat in pleasant and cheerful surroundings. Do not eat alone, especially in your room or in the same place all the time. Eat outdoors sometimes, in the fresh air of a lanai or balcony overlooking the garden. Better still, eat out in the garden, or eat out to explore the cuisine of other nations and cooks.

• Eat a variety of foods, but select foods from the carbohydrate group, as this is an obligatory fuel for your brain. Experts generally recommend taking at least 60 percent of your total calories from carbohydrates. Don't court boredom by eating the same rice, pasta, potatoes, bread and cereals all the time. Try the many ways cereals can be used as breakfast food snacks. Try rice cooked in different ways: pilaf, with beans (Mexican), with toppings (Chinese), rolled in seaweed with vegetables, fish and mango (Japanese). You can also have an array of pasta sauces, and bread in different flavors, sizes and shapes, and a variety of fillings. These foods are good sources of B-complex vitamins, a deficiency of which has been linked to depression and poor mental and emotional health.

• Eat most of your protein at breakfast and lunch or with daytime snacks, and your carbohydrates toward the end of the day. Carbohydrates promote sleep, while proteins promote alertness. Eating a carbohydrate-rich, low-protein meal at the end of the day may help bring about a good night's sleep.

More dietary tips

According to Sanirose, the following additional dietary tips may also help depression-prone individuals:

• Choose from lean and lower-fat cuts or portions of beef, pork, poultry and fish.

• Take fats and oils in moderation.

• Avoid or limit alcohol and alcoholic drinks, which act as depressants as well as diuretics, and can result in mild dehydration and the depletion of B-complex vitamins.

• Avoid or limit coffee to two cups per day.

• Maintain a good weight all the time.

• Drink eight to 10 glasses or more of fluids, especially water, throughout the day.

If individuals with severe stress or depression find it difficult to perform their activities of daily living because of their psychological problem, it may be best to consult a psychologist or a psychiatrist for some definitive interventions to help him/her address properly whatever is causing the stress or depression. No doubt, a strong emotional support system which consists of the patient's family and friends is important. Drugs may also be necessary. Healthy eating habits may be part of the nondrug regimen to help these individuals cope with their emotional and psychological imbalance.

China Bank to give away more than P8.7 million to lucky depositors

To celebrate 87 years of successful operations and strong partnerships, China Banking Corporation (China Bank) will be giving away a total of P8.7 million, tax free, through a raffle promotion dubbed "P8.7 at 87" which will run from March 1 to September 30, 2007. Over one hundred lucky China Bank depositors will get to win P10,000, P100,000, and P1,000,000 in the bi-monthly draws from May to September, and an extremely lucky one will be Two Million Pesos richer in the October 2007 grand draw.

Everyone can join by simply opening or maintaining a Regular Savings, ChinaCheck Plus, MoneyPlus Savings, and US Dollar Savings Account at any China Bank branch with an Average Daily Balance (ADB) of P5,000 or $500. Depositors will then be entitled to a computer-generated raffle entry per P5,000 or $500 additional deposit. As a bonus, qualified depositors who accomplish China Bank's customer update forms will be given one extra raffle entry. Visit www.chinabank.ph or see posters and flyers for the complete promo mechanics.

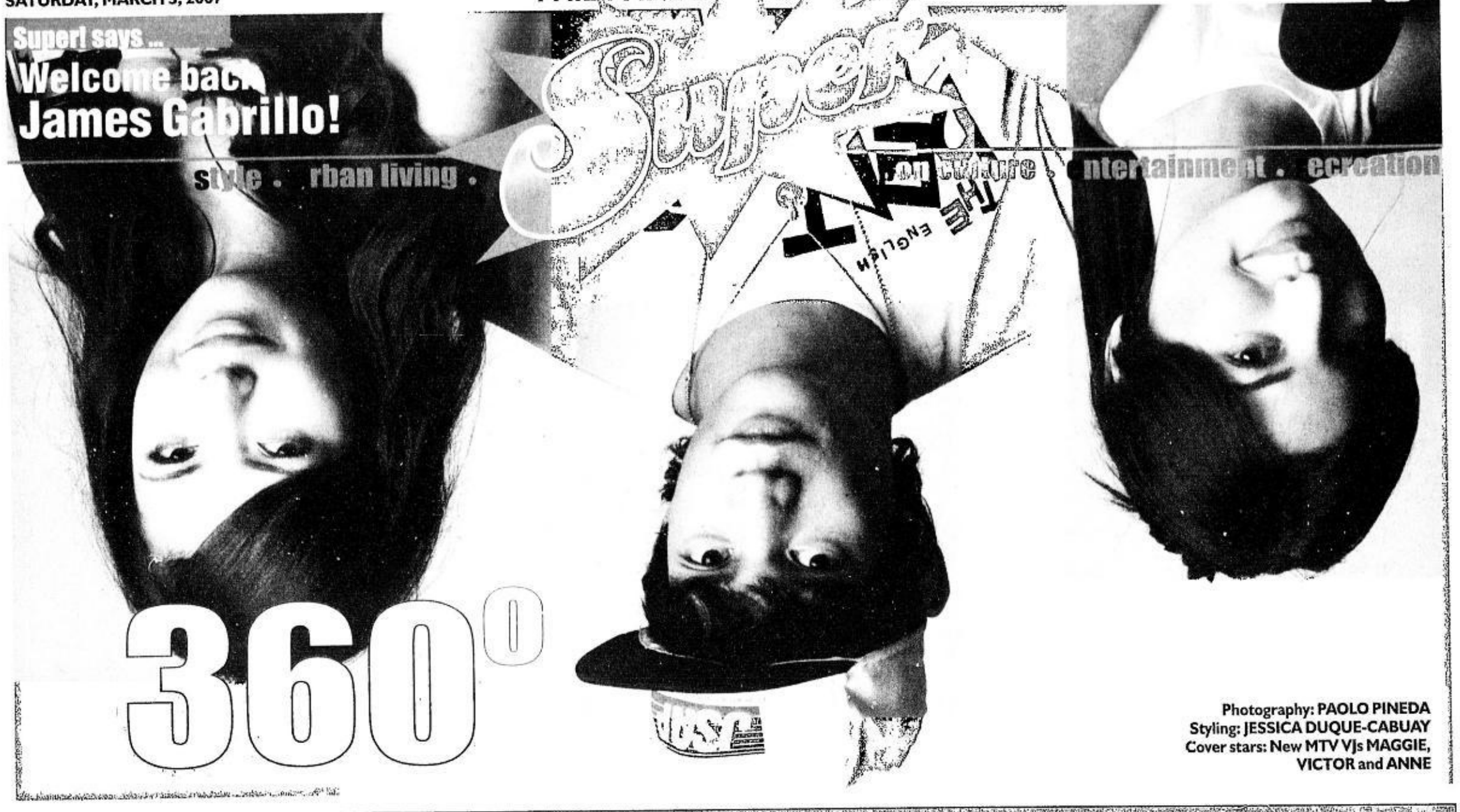
China Bank's "P8.7 at P87" promo is the bank's way of welcoming new depositors and thanking loyal clients for their trust and support throughout the years. Established on August 16,1920, China Bank has since grown and flourished to become one of the strongest and most profitable banks in the country today. Its consecutive record earnings and awards for banking excellence make China Bank one of the major players in the country's banking arena. Driven with a strong commitment to customer service, China Bank continues to develop and offer a wide array of customer-focused, innovative products and services. Now and in the decades to come, China Bank will remain true to its promise: "Your Success is Our Business".

Trust Institutions set Annual Trust Consciousness Week from March 19-23, 2007

The Trust Officers Association of the Philippines (TOAP), the industry association of banks and other financial institutions managing trust assets, in cooperation with the Trust Institute Foundation of the Philippines (TIFP) and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), will celebrate its annual Trust Consciousness Week from March 19-23, 2007. This year, the TOAP adopted as its theme, "Responding to Investors' Needs through Trust."

The annual event kicks-off with the publication of a Trust Supplement in leading dailies on March 19, followed by the traditional holding of a two-day free public seminar on March 20-21 at the Makati Sports Club. Ma. Lourdes T. de Vera, current TOAP President and Sr. Vice-President of Banco de Oro, announced that topics for this year's public seminar will include Estate Planning, Off-Shore Trusts, Investments and Personal Finance, an update on Unit Investment Trust Funds and a session on Know Your Rights as an Investor, to be delivered by high-caliber legal practitioners and speakers from this increasingly important sector of the financial services industry. BSP, through Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla, has issued Circular Letter No. CL-2007-006 in support of this year's national observance of Trust Consciousness Week. Other activities will include the traditional outreach project for the elderly beneficiaries of Golden Acres, an event that will cap the trust officers' week-long activities.

Additional details on the free seminar are available through the TOAP Secretariat at telephone nos. 894-0542 or 892-8033. ADVT.



Photography: PAOLO PINEDA
Styling: JESSICA DUQUE-CABUAY
Cover stars: New MTV VJs MAGGIE, VICTOR and ANNE

Future prospects

MTV's resurgence looks promising. How long will it last this time?

By James Gabrillo

AFTER ITS TWO-MONTH ABsence, MTV Philippines is back. KC Montero resumes hosting duties along with new VJs Anne Curtis, Victor Basa and Maggie Wilson. No doubt, this is something to feel good about—MTV, after all, is one of the few tube corps that have accurately echoed the generation's spunk (or lack of it).

Super! decided to probe from the other angle. In a country where songs with lyrics like "*Oh please, igiling mo, please, please, igiling mo*" become national anthems, does MTV's voice still resonate to its market? And just as vital, are its VJs still as competent as before in propelling the channel's messages?

Jock stones

Anne Curtis

- She's been auditioning for the job since four years ago: *"But I was young, overly bubbly—too much of everything!"*
- She asserts her strength: *"I cannot sing, but I know my music—it's my passion. The songs, the fashion, I love all of it!"*
- She admits her weakness: *"I'm gonna have a hard time interviewing bands and celebs 'cause I'm so sure I'm gonna freak out. But I promise to do total research before taping! Really!"*
- She's just (mega) excited: *"I'm so happy that people will finally see the real me. This isn't one of those roles that need internalization."*
- She has high hopes: *"I'll try to make people my age start watching again. I want to reach out to my generation."*

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It's good to be King

Behind the rock-hard 8-pack abs is a sensitive, good-humored spirit who once saved a boy from drowning. 300's Gerard Butler steps into my window

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

STEP INTO A TIME MACHINE and travel back to 480 BC. A small nation is threatened by an army so massive it "drinks rivers dry." Three hundred men stand against the enemy, ready to battle to the death. Yet they are no ordinary men, and neither are they ordinary soldiers. They are Spartans, the finest warriors the world has ever known, believed to have been descended from Hercules himself. Leading this tough, courageous phalanx is an über-extraordinary man himself, King Leonidas.

This is where we stand! This is where we fight! shouts the fiery and impassioned King, who leads his men to fight to "the beautiful death." This isn't just a souped-up Hollywood script—it's the true tale of the Battle of Thermopylae, one of the ancient world's greatest stories of ultimate honor, bravery and sacrifice. It was this historical event that inspired the iconic Frank Miller to retell the story in his Eisner Award-winning graphic novel, "300," which became the basis for the epic film.

HOT SCOT. Butler did his own stunts for the film "300"

Casting the perfect actor as the firebrand King Leonidas would have been a formidable task, yet the role seems to have been Gerard Butler's birthright. The Scottish actor and stage veteran, known for playing the title character of the big screen adaptation of "Phantom of the Opera," took the role of King Leonidas and took it to the next level with an awe-inspiring performance. Simply put, he kicked arse!

In this exclusive interview, Gerry tells all about running with cowbells and running away from cops, as well as his own true-to-life story of heroism. And with this irresistible Scottish accent to boot.

You started your acting career in theater and transitioned to film. What are some lessons you applied from the theater discipline to film acting?

My first acting jobs on stage were always full of energy. They were zany, mad and uncontrolled. There is so much power that you could wield by controlling that energy. In "Trainspotting" I played this crazy drug addict, hedonistic in every way. As I progressed in my career, I learned the value in understanding that energy, and controlling that energy. You can do so much more with so much less. The stage takes away a certain naturalness, while on film, the moments are so much more real. In little things, like the way (King Leonidas) places his hands, or how he kneels, you can understand the absolute confidence and masculinity this man has.

"Masculinity" is an understatement—it's hard not to notice that all the Spartans had such rock-hard bodies. I even sum up the movie as "300 men, two thousand abs"...

(Laughs) I was the only one who looked that good!

What physical training did you have to undergo to prepare for the role?

It was pretty severe. I was cast in the summer and the filming started late fall. By that time I was already in boot camp in Montreal for three and a half months. I had a very specific idea of how I wanted my body to look like, which was proportionately small to the armor. I wanted my forearms to be this big lump of meat bulging out! I had two trainers at the same time, and I was training for six hours a day. I was training here in L.A. and also in Montreal, for body building and body sculpting. I did circuit training wherein we used primitive tools like cowbells! I had to run while being tied to a wall, do squat presses, and run again with weights strapped on. I had specific weights all the time and would always pump to build my shoulders and chest. A lot of it was for building extreme stamina, and learning to use that explosive energy that comes from the core.

Sounds like you had a taste of real-life Spartan training.

Yes! It was hell. At first I thought that there was no way I could keep this up. But I kept pushing myself. During filming, my cast mates would see me getting more massive each day and say, "you know, you don't have train that hard!" But I managed to keep it up in the film. For me, it was also psychological. I had to be not only a Spartan but the King of the Spartans. He is a crazy motherf***er and hence I trained tougher than the rest. It makes a huge difference when you're feeling big and strong—you really feel the character. The stronger I got, the more I felt like I deserved to stand up in front of my men; the more they believed in me.

There was a great sense of camaraderie among your men in the film. Did you feel that among your film crew and cast mates as well?

Definitely. Zack (Snyder) and I met at a coffee shop in L.A. and we got along instantly. We were like two kids! After two minutes I was jumping up and down on the table. We share this great bond, and I have a lot of respect for him, I think he's a genius.

And your cast mates?

Because of boot camp, we all got close! It was a lot of fun. The stunt guys were with us all the time in training. They gave so much to the film, they were so generous and brave. It brought about this competitive camaraderie, and intensified the energy, adrenaline and testosterone level on the set.

The Battle of Thermopylae happened in 480 BC. Would you say that this story is still relevant today?

People can draw many political opinions from this movie. I don't think the film was made to make a point like that. For me, it was presenting the masculine archetype of that millennium. When men could be men. It was presenting the values of that time, when you sacrificed for what you believed in. It poses questions—how brave I am really? How courageous am I and what am I willing to fight to the end for? It was that über confidence and also that kind of arrogance that was so attractive to me. They are heroes, not typical, unsweetened, unpolished, they come from a pre-Christian era, they are more brutal than what we find palatable today. They were unapologetic, they were heroes that didn't ask for sympathy. And they were so arrogant that they could laugh at the enemy in their face. Kinda like if Scotland goes against the States!

And you'd be the last King of Scotland! Er ... moving on ...

(Laughs) They believed in their superiority so much and had such unbelievable faith. Spartans are physically, emotionally and psychologically prepared to become the machines they are. Their team spirit and their coherent focus in working together was also their power. That's how 300 men became 10,000. On the other hand, that's how the (Persian) army of 100,000 became weak, because they didn't believe in themselves.

In real life, you have your own story of bravery and heroism. You were given a "certificate of honor" by the Royal Humane Society of Scotland. Could you tell us more about it?

It was in Scotland, by the river near the hotel I stayed in. I was sitting outside looking out at the river when I heard screaming. But nobody heard it! I found out that there was a little kid in the water who was drowning. I pulled out my boots and dove in. I grabbed him and swam back to shore, but I was swimming more vertically instead of horizontally. I thought the kid was dead. Then this Italian guy pulled him out and did the Heimlich Maneuver. Water came out and the boy came to. Because of that I got an award for bravery, which was sweet. Thing is, that was at a crazy period in my life when just a week before I got into trouble with the police for disorderly behavior. To me that was a typical example of how I was living my life in extremes.

There's been a lot of hype and excitement for "300" around here, even the graphic novel is sold out in the bookstores. Any shout out to the Filipinos who'll be watching "300" in a few days?

I really want to go to the Philippines! I've met so many Filipinos that are so cool. So many amazing real people. Plus, I'm Catholic. I'm Scottish, but I'm Irish Catholic and we have that in common. And I find Filipinas very beautiful.

Say that with your accent and you'd be treated like a god-king.

(Laughs) I definitely have to go there.

WITH FRENEMIES LIKE THESE. Gerry Butler and Rodrigo Santoro (who plays Persian King Xerxes) at the Berlin Film Festival.

Hot director Zack Snyder paints a powerful picture

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit

HIS FEATURE FILM DEBUT, the 2004 zombie flick "Dawn of the Dead," showcased filmmaker Zack Snyder's stylish storytelling chops. The horror movie was a hit, and Snyder would soon be counted among Hollywood's most promising new directors. His penchant for briskly paced but suspenseful action sequences, together with his rock-and-roll visual sensibilities, make him the ideal choice to translate comic book visionary Frank Miller's bloody epic, "300," to the big screen.

The new movie, also co-written by Snyder, is swathed in muted colors and characterized by an unrelenting barrage of creative carnage. The adaptation chronicles the exploits of a defiant Spartan king and his army of 300 warriors, and stars Gerard Butler and Rodrigo Santoro as adversaries who command faithful foot soldiers.

Snyder, an award-winning commercial director, studied art at the Heatherlies School in London, and later, at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. He's currently working on the movie version of Alan Moore and Dave Gibbon's groundbreaking "Watchmen" series, about the fateful dealings of gritty and realistic super-beings.

The filmmaker talked about "300" and his artistic idols in an exclusive phone interview, while in Beverly Hills, California.

Was "300" easy to translate into a movie?

It was challenging. Initially, after I first found the graphic novel, I couldn't think that Frank Miller would want me to do that as a movie. But Gianni Nunnari, our producer, got the rights to the movie. No one was doing it, not Spielberg or the other directors. My intention was to make the movie as similar to the graphic novel as I can. Frank's supportive of me; he respected me and understood that I was gonna do what I can with it.

Were you involved with choosing the proper actors for "300"?

I was. It's totally my cast. I got all the people I wanted in it. After I met Gerry (Butler), it was easy to work with him, and the job he did in it was fantastic. He embraced the role and the character of King Leonidas. He carried the graphic novel around with him.

How have critics responded to the movie?

The critics are a hard crowd to please, but we had a screening yesterday and they were applauding and screaming! My hope is that people watch it to have an experience that they've never had in the movies.

You're currently working on "Watchmen." Please tell us about that.

It's going good! We're working on the script. We're drawi doing it right now. That's thing I'm working on righ a comic book fan, and it's daddy of them all. I thin men" is the only work Moore that I'm interested also since the others h done already.

Are you interested in on your own comic bo eventually?

I don't know. I'm a hu graphic novels and com But I feel that, right now my aesthetic goes, "Watch my mind. But sure, if I'm I'd do it.

What got you into them?

I grew up reading Hea My mother got it for me. S know that it was too violen sexy! Whenever I got Wolverine, normal co bought for me, I didn't li But when Frank Miller Moore came along, I star comic books a lot.

Since you like Heav you must be familiar wit painter Frank Frazetta.

I love Frazetta! He's a ence on "300."

How old are you? pretty young.

I'm 41. I look like a yo And I act like one, too.

When you switch off y maker side, what ke busy?

I play Gears of War on It lets me unwind. I train a a lot. I also read books; stantly looking at them. C comic book fare, I like bio

DANCE harder, leap higher, cheer louder ... and wear deodorant!

Kirsten Dunst did not invent cheerleading and other perky myths debunked!

Cheer factor

From page C4

the end," he adds.

Unusual tricks

Myth #4: Like Claire Bennet in "Heroes," all cheerleaders can spontaneously heal their own injuries. And stuff.

Fact: Well, cheerleaders can perform superhuman feats, but unlike teen mutants (or Chinese contortionists), they are shielded from evil—I mean, danger—by human safety nets called spotters. You have the NCC and Cheerleaders of America (COA) to thank for that.

"Spotters are team members who support and catch stunts, basket tosses, and pyramids. They're not just there for safety, but help perfect the flyers' body positions in the air," Joe explains. That also translates to a more enjoyable experience for spectators, who no longer have to worry that a particular stunt will end in tragedy.

Myth #5: Cheerleaders should only know how to spell. And smile. That's it.

Fact: Not exactly. It helps a great deal to be active in other sports. Having been involved with cheerleading for the past 13 years, Joe has seen that cheerleaders come from a lot of different backgrounds.

"I played soccer, baseball, football, ran track, and tried many different sports before I found my skill in cheerleading. It is hard to say what one key sport helps because cheerleaders use lifting, gymnastics, balance, and core strength to become the best in the sport," he recalls.

One, two, three, cheer!

As the afternoon drew to a close, a series of roars went up as host Joaqs Valdes announced the ones that made the cut in the college division. After taking sidelong glances, the Altas Perp Squad (no typo there), Adamson Pep Squad, Ateneo Blue Babble Battalion Cheerdancers and Lifters, CCP Bobcats, EAC Generals Pep Squad, Mapua Cheerping Cardinals (again, that ain't a typo—it's really, uh, "cheerping"), PUP Stars, PUP-Taguig Pep Squad, and the UP Pep Squad all breathed a long (really long) sigh of relief. They're all in!

Myth #6: Cheerleading is stupidly easy.

Fact: Three words: Human pyramid, duh. "Those who say it's not a real sport," Joe explains, "must [illegible] thinking of the earlier years of cheerleading where [illegible] cheerleader would just go out at games and ju[illegible] around with their pompons and scream at the fan[illegible] sporting events to get people to cheer along w[illegible] them. I am not putting down these years of cheerle[illegible] ing; without these years of cheerleading we would [illegible] be where we are today with the sport."

Just like other sports, cheerleading has tot[illegible] evolved and become trickier, with flips, twists, jum[illegible] tosses, and stunts helping the act. Yup, those skills [illegible] not taught or learned overnight and take years to [illegible] fect. In fact, Arnold Villanueva, coach of the CCP B[illegible] cats said that the NCC is the ultimate acid test fo[illegible] pep squads in the country. "Here, rules are well [illegible] fined and technical. No room to be complacent!" [illegible] observed.

Cheertastic

So this whole "cheering thing" has taught me a few more key things apart from the ones I already stated. Foremost is this: Quoting pop culture is a way useful tool. I mean, I probably wouldn't have been able to [illegible] plore the inner workings of cheerleading had I not [illegible] watched teen movies and researched the Web. After all, both Hollywood and the Internet never lie. Wi[illegible]

But back to Joe Jackson, who by then had this to say to those who diss the sport: You try it. "I don't know too many people who can be tossed 20 feet in the air, do a skill and then land safely back on the ground. Also, I don't know of many who can lift a person above their head with one hand and keep a smile on their face." Pause. "But wait a minute! I do know some people that can do that," he realizes. "They're called cheerleaders and we do it everyday."

The 2007 National Cheerleading Championship College Division Finals takes place at the Ultra tomorrow, March 4, 2007. Tickets available at all Ticketnet outlets tel. 911-5555.

The event is co-presented by Lactacyd. Media partners are 89.9 WTM, Summit Media and Studio 23, the home of the NCC. Watch out for TV specials beginning March 4, Sunday, 6-7 p.m. and all Sundays of March. For more details, log on to www.nccphilippines.com.

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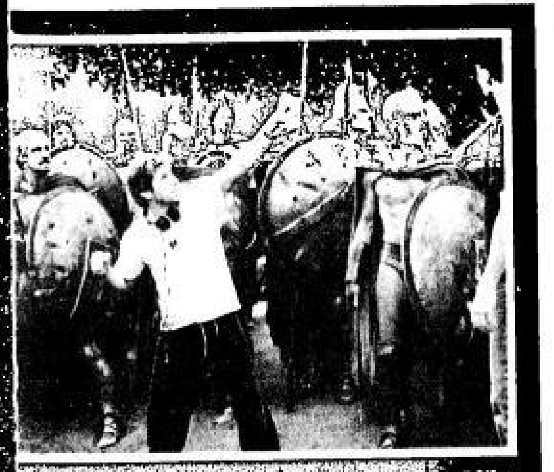

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history books and war novels. I like Cormac McCarthy's "Blood Meridian." I recommend it!

How is your knowledge in painting helpful to you as a director?

As far as my personal aesthetic goes, it's part of what I see. In that way, it's not necessarily a tool. I tend to not turn it off when I'm looking at things.

Judging by the movie, you certainly can appreciate Lynn Varley's colors on "300."

Oh my god. She's amazing!

Was it difficult to recreate that mood when you used a lot of blue screen shots, where elements were added later?

It's hard, but very rewarding. It's rewarding because of the potential and endless possibilities, and working that way enabled me to realize what I imagined. I've done a lot of commercials on exotic locations, but they're landscapes, instead of blue screens.

How do you feel about being able to express yourself in the film medium?

It's a privilege and an honor to be in a position like I'm in. There's no better place and resource. The studio people have been helpful. They've been incredible. I did a deal with Warner Bros. I have a company, Cruel and Unusual Films. We have a two-year, overall production deal, and "300" is the first film.

Who's your biggest artistic influence?

My mother is my biggest influence. She's a painter and a photographer. She encouraged me to paint and draw. She bought me a camera when I was 9 years old.

That's Entertainment?

"The supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership.'"

–Antonio Gramsci

By James Gabrillo

WE'VE ALL HEARD A LOT OF TALK about how the industry has gone through much change in the last decade. A lot of new "tween" stars, a lot of new *fantaseryes*, still a lot of Mother Lily, Joel Lamangan and Joey Reyes, and less of really good stringers on the frontline.

I wonder whether it really is that the industry went 'poof,' or is it because of the works churned out in the last few years? Is it because these giant studios like Star Cinema, Regal Films, and Violett Films (hmm) are doing fusty products and living off their previous successes?

Flip to free TV and you get shows like "Asian Treasures," "Now Na," and "Aalog-aalog." Wonderful. You also have the drama "Bakekang," a remake of the '70s show top-billed by Nora Aunor. This time, the deprived and unattractive lead part is played by Sunshine Dizon. Her antagonist, Sheryl Cruz, is good-looking and well off. What's "Bakekang" about? 98 percent of the time, rich Sheryl makes life miserable for poor Sunshine, a formula that never ceases to fascinate me. (The other 2 percent is spent for the close-up shots of GMA's new stars.)

Why aren't the studios learning from the past? These *fantaseryes* have to be really executed well or else they'll come out as empty. Look back at history (like, way back): the straight-to-betamax (classic?) "Blusang Itim 2" spelled the end of Princess Revilla's career. Judy Ann Santos will forever be remembered not just for starring in the trend-setting (hmm) "Mara Clara" but also for acting in the worst show ever, "Krystala." Jericho Rosales just about killed his career with "Panday," we won't ever see the face of that Matt guy after he butchered the character of Pedro Penduko (Janno Gibbs was totally better), and we will never look the same way again at special effects after "Mulawin"'s ultra-real flying sequences. Sad.

Poof happens

Distasteful entities on our screens raise a lot of questions. Does Bakekang exist to empower viewers? Do we need an *agimat* to be beautiful, to be heroic? Is the material produced now a reaction, a counter-culture to a society that's beholden by Vicky Belo? Really? If Herbert Bautista (or his 16-year-old nephew) played the remake of "Captain Barbell" instead of Richard Gutierrez, would it have rated as high as it did? Don't answer that.

What's more intriguing is the fact that audiences are buying the genre. "Bakekang" is one of this season's top-rated shows. What is this telling us about ourselves as consumers? Have we been so detoxified by the Pinoy studio formulas that we don't really care anymore what we're watching—just as long as there's crying, slapping, a lot of artificial devices and vindication in the end (hooray hooray)?

You know one reason why this is all happening? This business makes it difficult for any new blood to break through, regardless if you're ultra-talented or ultra-good looking. Think about it. Sure, there's a lot of buzz on how studios are buying the "indie" kids as directors and writers for their new creations. But really? In the end, the bigger companies dictate the direction of the work. Two examples are Quark Henares' "Super Noypi" and Mario Cornejo's "First Day High."

Have you noticed that for the last few years (or since the first "Mano Po" joined the Metro Manila Film Festival) that whenever Mother Lily would come up the stage to receive a trophy from Bayani Fernando's posse, she would talk about how she loves loves loves the industry? She'd pause every few seconds to wipe a tear, then she would go on and on about how she's really just doing all of us a big favor. The fake tears are excusable, but have a little respect—please don't tell us that you're not earning anything from this.

See, we have a handful of people who control the entire market, who dominate the movie house and airtime space. 'Poof' happens because every film, every TV show is produced by the same three or four guys. What the studios should understand is that we're really exhausted of the 'tried and tested' styles from the conglomerates.

How to be nice

Yesterday, I was watching this young 8-year-old boy in one of those morning talk shows. Don't ask why. Along with a bunch of other kids who were there, he's dreaming of becoming the next big singing sensation. During the course of the show, they sang songs, played games, told the host which one in the group they had a crush on. In the latter part, they showed a VTR for the kids—messages from their beloved parentals. What the mom of the 8-year-old boy said was curiously funny: Be nice. Don't fight with the other contestants. If you lose, don't worry—at least your Dad and I, and your teachers and your classmates got to see you on TV.

Is there room to generate the pulse in an industry ruled by junk?

I don't know, maybe the mom's message was really an intrusion, or comment, on the nature of entertainment itself? Is everything a game?

You know what, we have to recognize that the ratings and box-office matches push producers to stick with fashionable, albeit crappy, material. We have to accept that the situation will not change overnight. But we should also be appalled by how things have gone way overboard. Sure, TV and film made us see ourselves clearer by mirroring real life. But they've also chosen to abuse and exploit. And for what—entertainment?

If we want a 360-degree turn now, the industry should work on the material that they feed us. It's as simple as that. If we desire to ruin the authority that the corporate machines have on Philippine culture, the creative set should choose to tell stories about the real Pinoy, about our sense of class, our sense of selfhood—not just any casual topic that the producer deems is fly.

It's the realization that it is the simple solutions that work, it's choosing to generate the pulse rather than putting one's finger on it, it's the grasp on the fact that we can do other things. In this way, we move on to having a better industry. In this way, we grow up.

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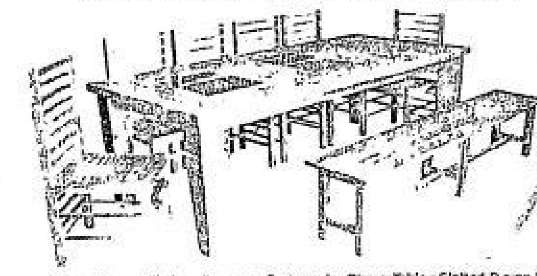

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Cheer factor

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

MAY THE BEST MOVES win." That was the unspoken directive that Sunday, as thirteen rah-rah-rah squads from a bunch of universities and colleges trooped to Le Pavilion along Roxas Boulevard for the open qualifiers of the 2007 National Cheerleading Championship (NCC).

After all, only nine teams would make it out of this place—and straight to the finals tomorrow, March 4—with their birthday-candle glow still intact. The rest would have to cartwheel back to their respective talent farms and practice way harder for next year's eliminations. Sis-boom-bah … humbug.

As I sat in, my spring-loaded eyeballs popped out of their sockets. It hit me that I had never witnessed a live cheerleading competition with, like, live cheerleaders before. (I had never seen so many Lycra outfits and mullets either, but that's another story.) Then again, I'm capable of soaking up scenes four times my body weight, so I was totally ready to huddle and learn.

MUSCLE MEMOR[illegible] International coach [illegible] Jackson holds NCC h[illegible] coach Paula dela Ll[illegible] a shoulde[illegible]

That's the spirit!

With the help of Studio 23's manager for sports marketing and programming, Carlos Valdes; NCC director and head organizer, Tricia Canilao; international cheerleading coach and safety judge, Joe Jackson; and yes, international source of unverified facts, Wikipedia, I cleared up a few misconceptions and sort of arrived at the following.

Myth #1: Kirsten Dunst invented cheerleading in 2000.

Fact: While it's true that "Bring It On," with its Cali-casual teen movie sheen, has become the matrix for all wannabe cheer squads everywhere, cheerleading actually started at Princeton University in the 1880s. Back then, those prepsters chanted, "Rah rah rah, tiger lion bear, sis sis sis, boom boom boom ahhhhhhh, Princeton Princeton Princeton!" as a way to boost school spirit at football games. (Had cheerleading been invented today, we'd probably be shouting voodoo-like about African dung beetles, manatees, and other underrepresented creatures. The environment may be doomed but it can be sassy, too, you know. So there.)

However, it was not until 1898 that Johnny Campbell, a courageous University of Minnesota student, stood in front of a crowd and directed them to yell as one unit. That makes Johnny Campbell, not Kirsten Dunst, the first cheerleader, like, ever.

Perky, perky, perky

Myth #2: Only Valley Girls can be cheerleaders.

Fact: Like, no. First of all, though about 97% of today's cheerleading participants are chicks, cheerleading started out as an all-dude activity. (Surprise.) Girls only started waving those pompoms in the 1920s, owing to a shortage of female-friendly collegiate sports and the invention of the pompom. (Psych.)

Second, you don't have to be from Rancho Carne High School in San Diego to be a cheerleader either. See, if Filipinos can become competent ice skaters without being exposed to actual winters, why can't they be good at something formerly associated with uptalking, Left Coast movie characters?

HUMAN PYRAMID *NG BAYAN*. Defending NCC champs UP Pep Squad

"I was very impressed with the skills the local teams have attained," says Joe Jackson. "They had a good understanding of what the sport of cheerleading was and they really put their own spin on it." Since his first impression was good, Joe feels that Filipino teams could become better and better, "evolving the sport to new heights" once the basic cheerleading skills are added and perfected.

No mascots!

That said, my eyes zoomed back to the mat to ooh and ahh at the contenders. From competition openers PUP-Taguig Pep Squad down to reigning champs UP Pep Squad, it was clear that each team brought its A game. (I was told that unlike other cheering competitions, this was more professional; dancing/annoying corporate-sponsored mascots were not there to sidetrack and cheese up the routines.) The NCC open qualifiers were all about pure skill and athleticism, which brings me nicely to my next point.

Myth #3: Cheerleading is all about the fancy stuff.

Fact: Not. As Joe noticed earlier, most Filipino cheerleaders tend to know how to breakdance but not how to do a proper high V.

"Arm motions, body movements, and placements, like high V's and low V's, front and side lunges, are the same for everyone. These should be used by bases [the ones that stay on the ground] and flyers [the ones cannonballing in the air] from the start of one's cheerleading career till

CHEER/ C2

Future prospects

But can they bring cool back?

VJs were treated as rock stars back then—until MYX put in pop tarts and mass attractions to host their shows. It ruined everything. VJs lost their cool. When MTV started signing up people like Johan Ekedum and Claire Olivar, they made it seem like anyone can be a VJ. The job lost much of its appeal.

Can MTV bring back the high and mighty status of the VJ? This all depends on the quality of the shows they'll generate, the artists that they'll opt to feature, and most importantly, the music that they'll be playing.

We'll be watching.

Victor Basa

- He's been dreaming of this: *"I was that kid who was awake late at night watching MTV Alternative Nation and Beavis and Butthead with the volume down. I was locked in the whole structure—'You study'—I fell victim to that. Now, I'm getting all the fringe benefits. It's really overwhelming."*
- He plans to exceed expectations: *"More than being an icon, I wanna be someone that people will listen to."*
- He thinks that everything he's done in the past year isn't selling out: *"You do these things to fuel the machine, 'cause you're trying to do things that you love."*
- He knows he's got cred: *"I'm part of a garage band with some friends. I can spend a day just previewing songs in record bars."*
- He has a clear target: *"We're gonna push things forward. This year, it's all about focus."*

Maggie Wilson

- She's back: *"I was 15 when I joined the VJ Hunt. Now I'm older—and better!"*
- She looks up to: *"Belinda Panelo. She's nuts! I love her—I'm super 'daldal' and super 'kulit' like her."*
- She's grown: *"I honestly did not have a clue about music back during the VJ Hunt. I was into hip-hop. That was it. During the past year, I've learned to appreciate local music and other genres."*
- She loves it: *"MTV is going to be more local, which is really good!"*

KC Montero

- He's back (again): *"I'm like a cockroach, they can't get rid of me. They wiped the slate clean—except me."*
- He's laying down the cards: *"I'm trying to see how far I can go—I'm not gonna stop until someone files a lawsuit. Now I'm producing 'The KC Montero Show.' It's been four years in the making. If it doesn't push thru this time, I'm quitting. Yeah, I'm pretty harsh—love me or hate me."*
- He's bent on making it work this time: *"We've been through ups and downs. And we've been filtered—the right people are on top. We've gotten bigger—stripped down to the bare essentials. We got some studs!"*

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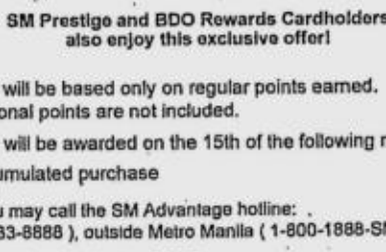

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Tim Yap

TIME IS RUNNING OUT. THE plane is leaving in 10 minutes and I am still on another plane. Beads of sweat begin to form on my forehead.

The plane touches down. Without waiting for it to stop, I get up, ignoring the angry glare of the flight attendant. The door swings open and like lightning I burst through it. An escape van is waiting. I hop onto it and grab on for dear life as it speeds away to where the second plane is.

The van comes to a screeching halt. I jump out and make a mad dash for the other plane. I barely make it. The main door closes behind me.

I heave a huge sigh of relief. A message comes through. "Congratulations, you have left Caticlan. Now you have to accomplish your mission in Naga."

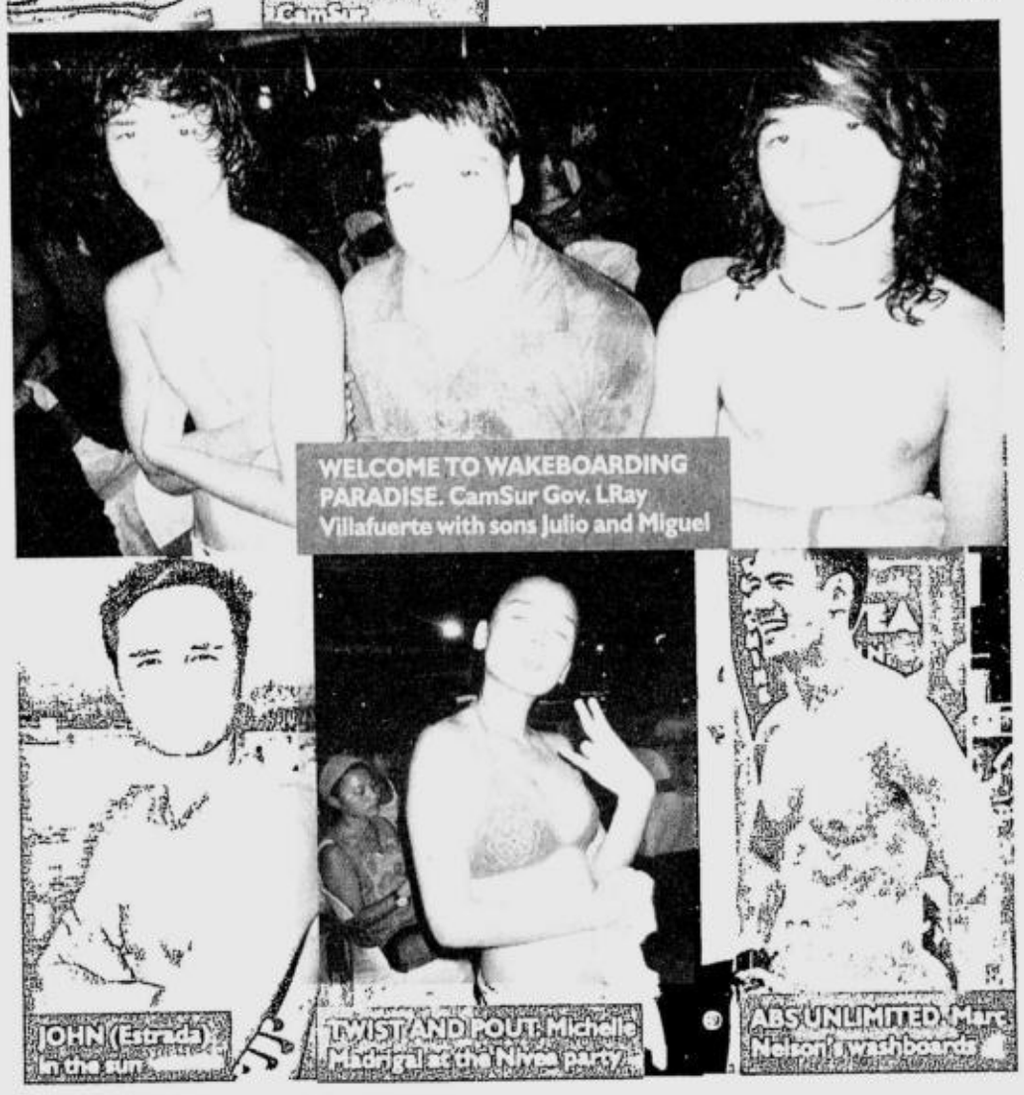
Wish you were here

"We are here in the world's best cable park," said wakeboarding afficionado **Ernie Lopez** as we entered the gates of the Camarines Sur Watersports Complex.

"And it's not even us Filipinos who are claiming this—it's everyone else in the world!" proudly beamed the MetroActive ed in chief about CamSur's main tourist draw, aside from its white sand beaches, *pili* nut (we were in the town of Pili) and rustic churches.

"Sunshine goodness with Nivea Sun!" The

CAMSUR/ D3



WELCOME TO WAKEBOARDING PARADISE. CamSur Gov. LRay Villafuerte with sons Julio and Miguel

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Julia Duncan @ The Chill, 8pm

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Christian Bautista
@ The Lounge, 6pm

March 4
Lani Misalucha
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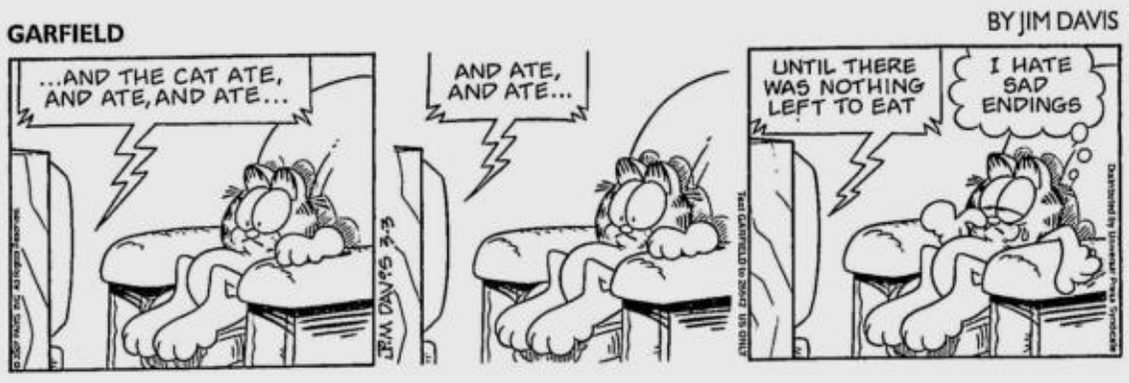
*Lowest single cash outlay

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS



A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

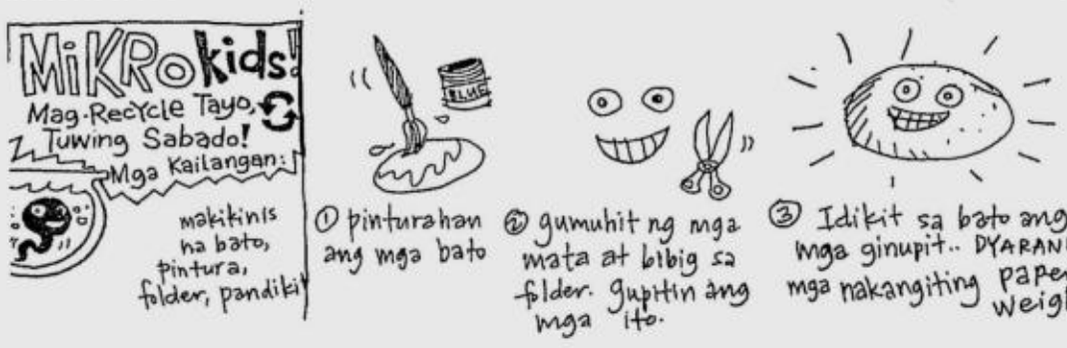
ANG WAIS NA KANDIDATO AY MAHILIG MAG-KISS SA MGA BABY

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO



TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

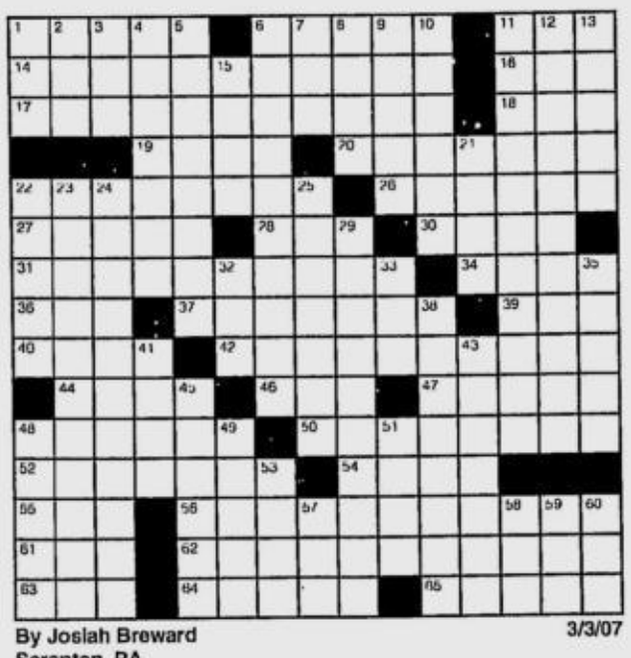
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Residence
6 U.S. Grant's first name
11 Links org.
14 Every 200 years
16 "The Raven" poet's initials
17 Tehachapi, Cascades, etc.
18 __ Tin Tin
19 TV's talking horse
20 Fats Domino's first name
22 Choose not to
26 Nautical rescue system
27 Narrow valleys
28 Part of UF
30 Hep dudes
31 Type of combat
34 Molten rock
36 Writer Rand
37 Splash and spot
39 Ad follower?
40 __ van der Rohe
42 Without mercy
44 Recipe amts.
46 Notes of scales
47 Spirals
48 1980 FBI investigation
50 Musical repetitions
52 Color receptive, in a way
54 Syst. of instructions
55 Narc's org.
56 Deceptive decorating devices
61 PC group
62 Famed Australian soprano
63 Thought-gatherer's sounds
64 Nincompoops
65 Amen in psalms

DOWN
1 Easy letters?
2 Short life story
3 Andes tuber
4 Anthropologist Morris
5 Consigns
6 Crowning glory
7 Rustic hotel
8 Sitar melody
9 Type of stage
10 Occult
11 Alimentary motion
12 University of Florida city
13 Sleep disorder
15 Transport-loss allowance
21 Voiced
22 Old Irish alphabet
23 Improvise
24 Memphis populace
25 Praise insincerely
29 Infection prevention procedure
32 Antithesis, briefly
33 Dolores __ Rio
35 Bottomless pit
38 Fun chambers
41 Humane org.
43 Fashionable
45 August 29 saint
48 Make confused
49 Fr. titles for girls
51 __-dieu (prayer bench)
53 Building additions
57 Glob or mod ending
58 Under the weather
59 Entrepreneur-aiding grp.
60 __-jongg



By Josiah Breward
Scranton, PA
3/3/07

Friday's Puzzle Solved

P	E	R	E	S		B	A	C	O	S		O	H	M
E	X	E	R	T		A	T	A	R	I		P	E	A
S	P	A	R	E	T	H	E	R	O	D		E	R	N
T	A	I		F	E	N		T	U	E	S	D	A	Y
S	T	R	I	F	E		H	A	R	D	U	P		
			N	I	N	J	A		K	I	B	I	T	Z
M	R	S	C		S	E	N	S	E	S		E	Y	E
B	A	T	H	E		A	D	E		H	A	C	K	S
A	P	E		L	O	N	G	E	R		B	E	E	T
S	T	A	B	L	E		U	N	I	T	E			
		M	A	I	D	E	N		C	U	D	G	E	L
H	A	I	R	P	I	N		W	O	N		E	M	U
O	U	R		S	P	A	C	E	H	E	A	T	E	R
P	R	O		E	A	T	O	N		R	H	O	N	E
I	A	N		S	L	E	P	T		S	A	N	D	S

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3/3/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You always do your homework. You work hard to prepare yourself for whatever you do. You're focused and goal-oriented. Many of you have highly developed visual skills as well. It's a small wonder that you're very absorbed in whatever you do. Of course, this is a recipe for success. Expect a beautiful, social year ahead that favors relationships.

Birthdate of: Jackie Joyner-Kersee, runner; Jessica Biel, actress; Miranda Richardson, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might feel pulled between your sense of duty to others and your sense of duty to yourself today. (Just take care of yourself.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Friends are demanding today, but romantic interests or responsibilities with children are in the way. This is always a tough choice. Do your best to juggle this.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): The demands of career and your public life are in conflict with the demands of home, family and domestic matters. However, you cannot ignore your public life.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Avoid arguments about religion and politics. Likewise, disputes about travel, publishing and the media could come to a head at this time. It's a Full Moon thang. (Gone in 48 hours.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Avoid important decisions about property, shared holdings, money and earnings. Today is the Full Moon, and people's feelings are running high.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is the only Full Moon in your sign all year. That's why you feel at odds with others. Each Full Moon is a Sun-Moon opposition, and today you're part of this process! (Easy does it.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): It's hard to keep everybody happy at work today. Today's Full Moon could cause a few snarls. Just be patient and cooperative.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Your obligations to others are in conflict with your personal life today. This is one time where you have to put your own needs ahead of others.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Despite the demands of your public life, it's important that you focus on home, family and real estate needs right now. This part of your life needs your attention.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Just attend to daily details today. Try to stay ahead of the game. Be careful when driving or walking, because this is a mildly accident-prone day for you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Today's Full Moon makes you aware of financial problems and possible disputes over shared possessions. This is not an ideal day to try to settle this kind of thing. Wait 48 hours.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Conversation with others might go sideways today because of the Full Moon. (This particular Full Moon directly opposes your sign!) Don't react to others. Remain calm and steady.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

							3	
		7		6				
	5		4	3		8		2
		5		2	3		6	
	3		9	4		5		
2		6		8	7		9	
				5		4		
	9							

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 3/03

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	7	5	9	2	8	6	3	1
3	6	9	5	1	7	8	2	4
1	2	8	4	6	3	5	9	7
9	1	4	2	5	6	7	8	3
8	5	6	3	7	1	9	4	2
2	3	7	8	4	9	1	5	6
6	4	3	1	9	5	2	7	8
5	8	1	7	3	2	4	6	9
7	9	2	6	8	4	3	1	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 3/02

CamSur Royale

From page D1

banner warmly welcomed me as a barrage of people screamed in my direction. I waved at them grandly, exuding the confidence of **Leo DiCaprio** as I walked down the CamSur carpet. And then a familiar vision miraculously appeared behind me, waving back to the fans. It was **Angel Locsin**.

Several Crocs-clad celebrities were rubbing Nivea Sun non-sticky lotion on each other, which proved to be a sight for sore eyes. Others were exhibiting their skills in cableskiing, wakeboarding, kneeboarding, waterskiing and wakeskating, while I tried to wake up. The sporty show biz and media set present in CamSur were in various shades of Nivea team (Sun, Lip, Visage, Body and Nivea for Men) jerseys as they were gearing up for the final battle, a wakeboard tourney. I spotted **Rica King**, Nivea's most well-loved marketing maven, as she opened her arms and welcomed me to their most awaited annual summer event.

We stayed at the cabanas built for the event and for the expected influx of global travelers who have heard about this part of the world.

"Wish you were here" is CamSur's tourism come-hither phrase. CamSur—they'll come for sure! But first, they need to install mirrors in the bathrooms, improve service and other amenities in this government-run facility. Yes, it was the first time for anyone to occupy these units, but for vanity-obsessed peeps—a mirror is a must!

Non-sticky situation

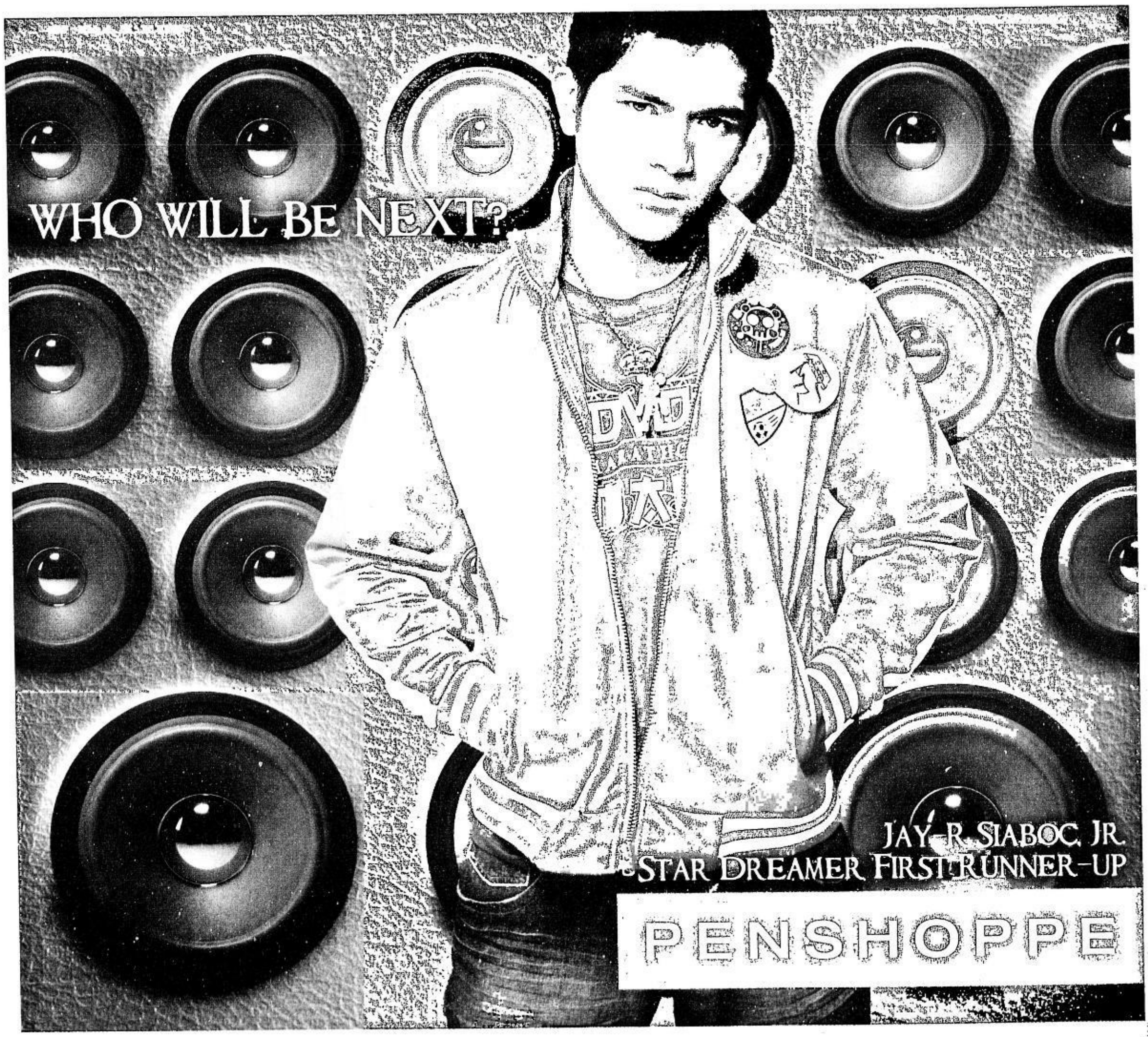
I had to make do with looking at my reflection on the shower head, on the steel cover of my Euphoria by Calvin Kein cologne

CAMSUR/ D4

PORT PENSHOPPE

PENSHOPPE SHIPS IN ITS NAUTICAL SUMMER COLLECTION.
ALL ABOARD!

PENSHOPPE



GAYA NG DATI. The Dawn rocks the CamSur scene.

CamSur Royale

From page D3

and from the surface of the water as I dabbed Nivea non-sticky lotion all over me. Blame my inner Narcissus, but despite all these, the CWC (CamSur Watersports Complex) was a paradise on earth—for wakeboarders.

Credit goes to dynamic CamSur Gov. **LRay Villafuerte** who built this city (on rock n' roll!) who made sure guests to his pride and palace felt right at home. If all our governors acted like Governor LRay, then more people will go all over our islands for a party hop! Hep, hep! HooLRay!

My hop started at midnight, the party's peak right after legendary rock band The Dawn's performance. **JM Rodriguez** and **Angelu de Leon** were playing dance instructor to the European delegation of watersports enthusiasts as **Jackie Castillejo** and **Paolo Paraiso** took turns in throwing party peeps into the pool as **DJ Juno** of Couchlab and **Stephen Ku** alternated on the DJ deck.

The bar was fully stocked with Jagermeister, Amarula, Skyy and Midori—so suffice it to say that it was a total liquid experience! Others hopped to the after-party at the villa, but that's another story.

Water sports during the day, bar squirts during the night. Shaken or stirred, do I look like someone who gives a bloody damn?

GUYS gone wild!

GIRLS GONE MILD. Lourdes Duran, Roselle Cua, Jackie De Vera and Joan Tan

SUMMER HOLIDAY. Rica King and Angel Locsin

SKIN-SATIONAL. Rambo Nunez and Bettina Carlos

The Trippy Sound of Tortured Souls

NO PAIN. Audio-musement attraction Tortured Souls

ON A SWELTERING SPRING morning in 2001, three musicians gathered at a muggy basement studio in Brooklyn for a spur-of-the-moment jam session. As they began to organize their instruments—a decrepit set of drums, vintage keyboards, and bass guitars—they were overcome by a bold idea: that modern dance music could be performed completely live.

A few months later, the trio released a raw single, "I Might Do Something Wrong." It was an instant classic. The track that not only broke all the known rules of electronica, it also gave birth to the indie ensemble's now-famous moniker, Tortured Soul, and their ground-breaking concept: Live Soulful House.

Composed of drummer/vocalist John-Christian Urich, keyboardist Ethan White, and bassist Jkriv, the innovative sonic style of Tortured Soul blends sleek dancefloor productions with sultry vocals and organic instrumentation. They've wowed the most discriminating crowds in DJ-driven clubs, but have proven to be equally adept at rocking jazz festival audiences, including those in Montreal and Cape Town. They craft a forward-thinking sound ("the future of house music," as cult British DJ Gilles Peterson once put it), while their slick white shirts and signature black ties are a throwback to the swoony jazz masters of the past.

House of Soul flies in the NYC-based trio on Friday, March 9, at the NBC Tent. Talented turntablists DJs Benjo Marquez and Jason Soong are set to heat up the dancefloor before the live house groovers hit the decks. Tickets are available at M1, Odyssey, and O Music outlets. Call +63917 888 3888 or visit houseofsoul-music.com.

24/7 GIGS

Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dario

Other Super! 24/7 events:

Mar. 3, Saturday

Wake Up Your Seatmate at Mag:net Café Katipunan; Deep Down & Discofied w/ DJs Karl Ty & Marie Garcia at Fiamma; Latin House w/ Tribo Manila at Mezze; Siesta w/ Soundsgood DJs at Embassy Cuisine; House Nation at Capone's; Jam Lang: Red Horse Beer Party at Club O (formerly Dish); Rouge at M Café ; Sexy Saturdays at Absinth; DJs Jon Herrera & Tolo Bote at Temple; Bacardi Bling at Vida Malate; Sleepless at Embassy Club; DJs Scratchmark & Bliss at Prince of Jaipur; Drag-on Saturdays at Bed

Mar. 4, Sunday

Ballet Philippines' Neo Filipino: España Extension at CCP; Andrew Lloyd Webber's Song and Dance at Onstage Greenbelt; Basilia ng Malolos at UP Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero Theater; Swiss Culinary Festival at Mandarin Oriental Manila; Maui Taylor at Metro Bar

Mar. 5, Monday

Severo at Mag:net Café Katipunan; Women's Film Festival at UP Cine Adarna; Happy Mondays hosted by Borgy Manotoc at Embassy Cuisine; I Don't Like Mondays! w/ DJ RO at Gweilos Makati; Chemical Underground at Absinth; Retro Nights at Azzurro Linden Suites

Mar. 6, Tuesday

The Bloomfields at Strumm's; Wake Up Your Seatmate at Mag:net Café Katipunan; Women's Film Festival at UP Cine Adarna; Lounge Night w/ Zenaida Celdran at Mezze; Cuisine Royale w/ DJ Manolet Dario at Embassy Cuisine; 80s & 90s Night w/ DJ Jeff at Temple; Sparkle w/ DJs Erwin Edralin & Patch at Absinth; Guarana at Café Havana Greenbelt; Open Mic Night w/ Shayne & Brownsugar at Club O (formerly Dish)

Mar. 7, Wednesday

Tortured Soul Pre-event Party feat. House of Soul DJs at Fez, Serendra; The Bloomfields at Eastwood City; Lush: Smooth Rn'B at Fiamma; DJ Boyet Almazan at Mezze; Makopa & Milestone at Mag:net Café Katipunan; DJs Karl Ty & Cao Ocampo at Embassy Cuisine; DJs Mars Miranda & Johnyverse at Embassy; Live Rock Bands at Temple; Cebalo at Club O (formerly Dish); Willy Wanka's Music Factory at Gweilos Makati; DJs Kimozave & Chrismyx at Prince of Jaipur; Women's Film Festival at UP Cine Adarna

Mar. 8, Thursday

Chocolate Buffet Night at Paseo Uno; La Luna Loca w/ Tribo Manila at Mezze ; Fluxxe: Whatever Thursdays at Absinth; Worldwide Thursdays w/ Soundsgood at Nuvo; SPIT at Mag:net Café; Backtrack Thursdays at Club O (formerly Dish); Open Mic Night at Azzurro Linden Suites; World's Fastest Open Bar at Bed

Mar. 9, Friday

House of Soul presents Tortured Soul: Live in Manila! w/ DJs Benjo Marquez & Jason Soong at NBC Tent, The Fort; Kitchie Nadal & Barbie Almalbis at Araneta Coliseum; Journey to Hope concert at AFP Theater; Virtuoso Strings at CCP; DLSU's Flare Party at Club O (formerly Dish); Tessie Tomas, Jon Santos & John Lapus at Captain's Bar; Sala Ibiza w/ DJ Karl Ty at Nuvo; Latin Connection at Piedra; Decadance w/ Boyet Almazan at Jill's; DJ Tony Pavia at Mezze; House Sessions w/ DJ Bombi at Fiamma; MyHOUSE at M Café; MILF: Mom I Love Fridays! at Absinth; Dirty Kitchen at Mag:net Café Katipunan; The Jerks at 70s Bistro

Schedules may change without prior notice. For more information and a complete listing of events, text 24/7 GIGS and send to 2851 (Globe) and 2951 (Smart). Log on to mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 NOCTURNAL NAVIGATOR at bars and restaurants around the city. Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events@mag24-7.com & mag24_7@yahoo.com.

Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment E-mail: pr_saturday_special@inquirer.com.ph

SATURDAY Special

Editor Nestor U. Torre • Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

Text us your feedback: inquirer sat name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

HUDSON. Was ordered to unleash her inner diva on the set of "Dreamgirls."

Jennifer Hudson, zero

HOLLYWOOD—IN the space of two years, Jennifer Hudson has gone from reality television zero to Oscar-winning hero.

The 25-year-old scooped the best supporting actress Oscar on Sunday for her portrayal of singer Effie Melody White in the musical, "Dreamgirls," crowning a fairytale journey for the reaslity television reject.

An emotional Hudson thanked God, her family, and her movie's cast and crew for her victory, saying, "I thank you all for helping me keep the faith, even when I didn't."

Biggest inspiration

She also had a special word for her late grandmother: "She was my biggest inspiration for everything, because she was a singer, and she had the passion for it, but she never had the chance. And that was the thing that pushed me forward to continue."

Hudson first came to prominence as a contestant on the hit TV show, "American Idol," which sees ambitious wannabes plucked from obscurity and presented with the chance to become a pop star.

But, while Hudson impressed the show's notoriously difficult-to-please judges with the range of her singing, she was eliminated in the finals. Fantasia Barrino eventually won.

Profile

Nevertheless, the show gave her a profile she was able to exploit for the purpose of securing live concert performances across the United States during the next two years.

Then, with the memory of her 15 minutes of fame beginning to fade, she auditioned for the part of Effie in "Dreamgirls." Against the odds, she beat out 750 other hopefuls—including Barrino!

Director Bill Condon was convinced of Hudson's talent, even though she lacked acting experience,. But, he had to order her to unleash her inner diva on the set.

Too professional

"Bill told me, 'Look, you're too professional and too nice.' But, *that's* me, you know? I'm a polite, well-brought-up girl," Hudson reasoned.

"Bill ordered, 'Stop apologizing, show up late, barge in, get angry, or throw something. Find that emotion, connect with anger, and give me some outrage!'

"He'd have me walk into the rehearsal and be rude to people. We had to get to this point when Effie had this presence, where *nothing* started till she walked in the room. Once we got there, it became fun!"

Rendition

The Oscar-winning results of Condon's exhortations speak for themselves. Hudson ends up stealing the show with her singing, and her barnstorming rendition of the Jennifer Holliday classic, "And I Am Telling You (I'm Not Going)," has reportedly had cinema audiences giving standing ovations in theaters.

Her performance had also earned her awards from the Golden Globes and the Screen Actors Guild. Hudson bested Adriana Barraza and Rinko Kikuchi of "Babel," Cate Blanchett ("Notes on a Scandal") and Abigail Breslin ("Little Miss Sunshine") to take home the coveted Oscar statuette. *AFP*

CARICATURE BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

THE OSCAR-WINNING actress beat Fantasia Barrino for the role of Effie White.

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AFTER WORKING SO HARD TO make the mark and earn the right to march during the commencement exercises, the Class of 2007 deserves some time to celebrate and have fun. But where to go and have a blast, that is the question. The Malayan Plaza offers the answer with its Grand Graduation Blowout package.

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Strategically located at the heart of the Ortigas Center in Pasig City, the posh Malayan Plaza is a prime residential property managed by the renowned Quantum Hotels and Resorts. It boasts of fully furnished stylish units (studios, 1 & 2 bedrooms) complete with living, dining, and kitchen facilities and equipped with the trappings of the modern day lifestyle. Each Malayan unit is also equipped with techno-savvy facilities such as cable, NDD/IDD, and broadband internet access. And being a quality Quantum serviced suite, Malayan Plaza makes sure that guests enjoy more than just their stay in the room. Other features include swimming pool, open-air whirlpool, gym, game room, mini-golf putting green, children's playground and playroom, housekeeping/laundry/concierge services, and security surveillance monitoring.

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Prior reservations are strongly advised for The Malayan Plaza's Grand Graduation Blowout. For more information and bookings, call 706-0055 or e-mail sales@quantumsuites.com.

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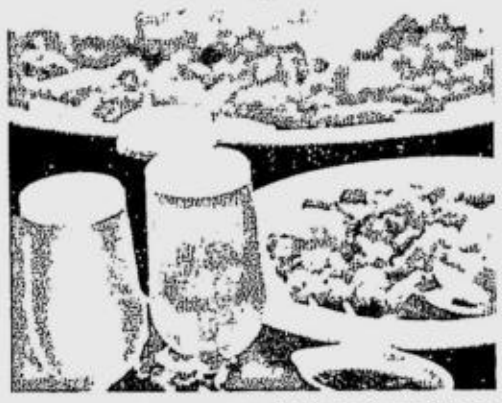

THE RICHMONDE Hotel's Exchange Bar is envisaged to be a relaxed atmosphere with elegantly cushioned sofas, clustered into conversational groups for casual business meetings during the day. At night, it transforms into the warmth and intimacy of an entertainment lounge where a pool of talented singers perform nightly.

Bottomless good times are enjoyed from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m., Mondays to Fridays, as The Exchange serves up a drink-all-you-can spree of local beers, featured cocktail drinks, iced tea or softdrinks with appetizing hors d'oeuvres or "pica-pica" as it is more popularly called in Filipino lingo, for only P375 net. On Saturdays, the fun continues with 50 percent off on all local beers from 5 until 8 p.m.

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So, what better way to end your day than cozying up at The Exchange for endless treats of appetizing food, fine drinks, and soothing live music. The Exchange Bar is located at the 2nd floor of The Richmonde Hotel at 21 San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Operating hours are from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m., Mondays to Saturdays and 4 p.m. to 12 midnight, Sundays. For inquiries and reservations, please call (632) 638-7777 extension 3409.

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PUERTO PRINCESA, PALAWAN, IS considered as one of the most exciting places to visit. Tourist often go home enthralled with vivid memories of its natural beauty, exotic landscapes and endless adventure offerings. During the Spanish era, Palawan was divided into three provinces - Castilla, Balabac, and Asturias. The latter being the capital, now known as Puerto Princesa, it is but fitting for Asturias Hotel to be named as such since it is the only hotel in the area that truly captures the island's unparalleled natural beauty and Castilian charm. Asturias Hotel gives you more reasons to enjoy and explore Palawan's wealth of wonders this summer season with the special "Asturias Palawan Adventure Package." Priced at only P8,600 net per person (based on twin and triple sharing), this special offer affords adventure lovers with a 4 days and 3 nights accommodation in the Mediterranean-inspired Asturias Hotel, roundtrip airport transfers, welcome drink and full board meals throughout one's stay. Guests' adventure itinerary includes half-day city tour, exploration tour of the renowned St. Paul's Underground River, and a Honda island hopping escapade. Plus, availing the package entitles guests for a complimentary use of the hotel's inviting swimming pool. Kids ages 5 to 11 years old enjoy a discounted packaged price of only P6,300 net per child. The "Asturias Palawan Adventure Package" was created in line with the hotel's thrust in promoting eco-tourism and to meet the increasing demand of its valued patrons. Asturias Hotel invites you to explore Palawan and rediscover ones zest for adventure. For inquiries and reservations, call their Manila Sales Office at tel no. 751-3615. Visit their website at www.asturiashotel.ph.

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Waterfront launches biggest, best and newest rooms

WATERFRONT CEBU CITY HOTEL & CASINO (WCCHC), the flagship property of Waterfront Hotels and Casinos, successfully completes its renovation program of "Bigger, Better, Newer Rooms", the company's P60 million room and suite enhancement program.

. Now that the Hotel has successfully completed its renovation program, it formally launches its "Biggest, Best And Newest Rooms" campaign, taking pride in all 231 newly renovated guest rooms, producing new room categories as well: 157 Superior Rooms, 165 Deluxe Rooms, 16 all-new Junior Suites, 29 new Executive Suites, 3 new Bridal Suites, and 4 new Family Suites.

Hotel management has also been keeping busy in the past months planning and arranging a number of other features and services that these newly renovated rooms will offer as soon as they are launched. Incorporated into the suite rooms' new look is a well-designed and spacious workspace that includes a personal computer and fax machine. Flat screen televisions in the living room areas, Plasma colored televisions in the bedrooms, a separate bathtub and a rainshower bath, among others.

Waterfront Cebu City Hotel & Casino is located at Salinas Drive, Lahug Cebu City, Philippines. For inquiries and reservations, please contact (032) 232-6888, (02)687-0888 or email wcch@waterfrontshotels.net, msro@waterfronthotels.net or visit www.waterfronthotels.com.ph.

Behn tells an important story

By Nestor U. Torre

RECENTLY, WE ADjusted our schedule and braved the traffic to go all the way to the Bantayog ng mga Bayani compound on Quezon blvd., QC, to catch the Sadeka Foundation's nostalgic tribute to the late, great filmmaker, Lino Brocka.

The afternoon of recollections was conceptualized by Behn Cervantes, a close friend of Lino's since their freshman days at UP in the 1950s.

Cultural heroes

Behn correctly observes that today's youth know practically nothing about departed cultural heroes like Brocka, so an effort must be made to help them make up for the gap.

Behn has chosen to do this by mounting "storytelling" sessions initiated by that Saturday event, which we feel should be the first of many such interactions all over the country, and ultimately on DVD.

Aside from recalling his long friendship and professional working relationship with Lino, Behn also showed some 80 photos on Powerpoint, to provide visual corroboration of his anecdotes.

The photos were truly choice, and thrilled viewers with their intimate views, not just of Philippine theater and film decades ago, but also of the political scene, where both Lino and Behn were very active.

Explosive film

The Feb. 10 session was capped by a screening of Brocka's explosive film, "Orapronobis," which was banned by the Marcos dictatorship. We had already seen the film at a private preview at the Moscow Film Festival, so we didn't stay for the screening.

But, one of the film's stars, Gina Alajar, did, and she went on to share insightful recollections of her long working relationship with Brocka, from "Wanted: Perfect Mother" when she was still a child, all the way to "Kapit sa Patalim" and "Orapronobis."

The session made a strong impression on the SRO audience, and should be the first of many such storytelling and screening events all over the country, so that Brocka's principles and artistry can come to bear again on the nation's life, particularly on the sensibilities of today's youth.

Values

We hope that the NCCA and CCP will see the values of this endeavor, and help fund a tour of Behn's storytelling sessions, to maximize their already significant effect.

Even better, Behn also hopes to come up with other stroytelling sessions about Lorenzo Tañada and other important figures in our political or cultural history.

Behn is the perfect storyteller for such sessions, because he knew his important subjects well, understands what made them exceptional, and appreciates their unique effect on the nation's life, which must not be allowed to diminish due to lack of concern.

Also a big plus is Behn's being Behn—meaning, he's articulate, colorful, cares a lot, isn't shy about wearing his heart on his sleeve (and his displeasure of his face), and keeps things revealingly personal, instead of boringly official.

His subjects are fortunate to have such a perceptive and colorfully articulate friend to tell their important stories for the new generation of Filipinos who need to know, remember and learn from their heretofore overlooked elders.

BROCKA (left) and Cervantes (center) were arrested in the '70s for their anti-martial law sentiments.

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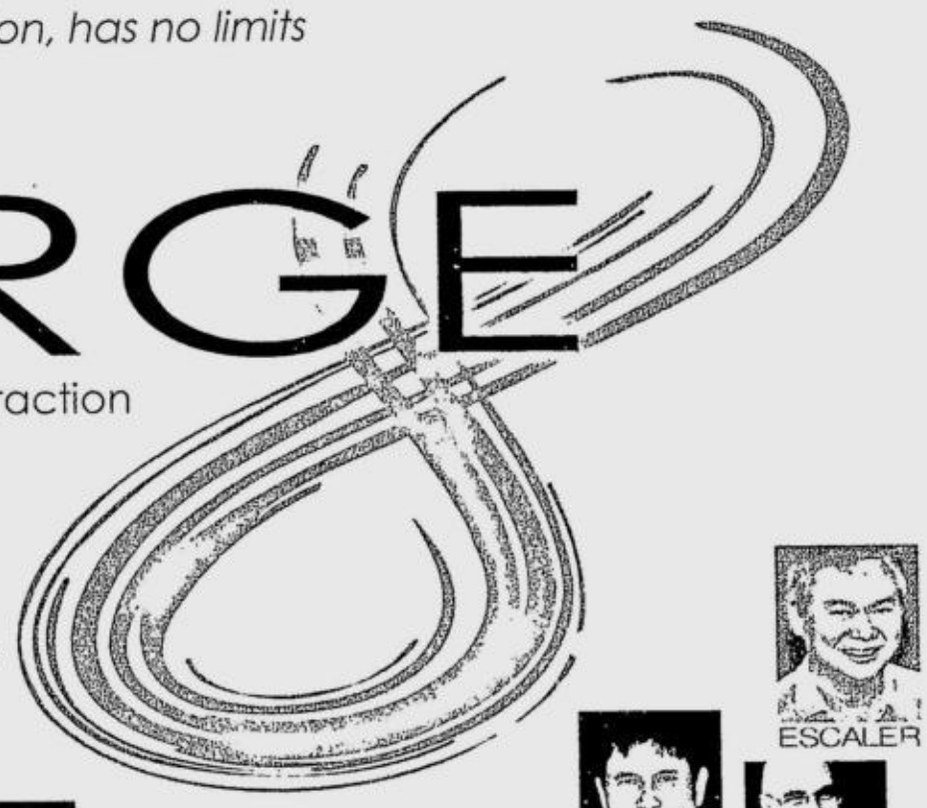
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China's arthouse films make waves

BERLIN—WHILE AUDIENCES HALFWAY across the world shower Chinese arthouse cinema with adulation and awards, finding viewers at home seem much harder.

"Tuya's Marriage," directed by Wang Quan'an, won the Berlin film festival's top award recently, following victory for another Chinese movie, "Still Life," in Venice last September.

Both productions are low-budget, slice-of-life dramas that highlight the environmental and human cost of the country's rapid economic expansion, but it is unlikely that either movie will fill Chinese movie theaters or fly off the shelves in DVD stores.

"TUYA'S MARRIAGE." Recipient of this year's Golden Bear Award in Berlin.

Problem

Some Chinese directors in Berlin this year argued that the problem was the same as in any country, where blockbusters and romantic comedies dominate the box office at the expense of more serious, small-scale films.

But, others believed the gap between the two movie "genres" had widened in China, making it harder to find backing for lower-budget pictures.

"This division is a strange thing, and it's not normal to see it so pronounced as it is now in China," said Wang. He argued that the distinction between arthouse and commercial cinema was not so wide 20 years ago, when Zhang Yimou was making his acclaimed "Red Sorghum," which coincidentally also won Berlin's Golden Bear in 1988.

Intellectuals

"Back then, we did not have such divisions—an arthouse film was seen by ordinary audiences. It was a hit among intellectuals, critics and ordinary audiences," Wang explained.

"It's not good to have strong divisions between the two genres." When he started filming "Tuya's Marriage," about a family of herders whose livelihood is threatened by the desertification of the Mongolian steppe, Wang recalls people saying nobody in China would want to see it except "a few political officers."

Several directors said that now was a good time to be making movies in China, despite the challenge of finding a home audience and tussling with the censors.

Zhang Yang, whose film, "Getting Home," was showcased in Berlin outside the main competition, said it was a "pretty good time" for young directors.

"It's not like how it was before, when a film was totally ripped to pieces by the censors."

Fang Li, producer of the competition film, "Lost in Beijing," added that Chinese cinema had moved on from the days when the hero would tend to be the upstanding peasant.

Censorship

He said censorship decisions were not motivated so much by politics, but by how generations thought differently about sex, violence or gambling.

His movie underlines how censorship remains a major frustration for arthouse directors. The makers of the film about haves and have-nots in modern-day Beijing had weeks of talks with state censors before they finally agreed on a revised version.

Due to the lack of time, though, Fang said the uncensored film was screened in Berlin, presenting possibly serious consequences for him and up-and-coming female director, Li Yu.

Banned

In 2006, Lou Ye was banned from making films for five years after his movie, "Summer Palace," was shown in Cannes without approval.

Li and others called for a ratings system similar to those used in the West rather than a simple 'yes' or 'no' decision.

"In China, there's only one category," shared Hong Kong producer Nansun Shi, who was on the jury in Berlin. "Either it passes or it doesn't. This system just doesn't work anymore!"

Reuters

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SATURDAY *Special*

Andy Bais finds his measure of 'Happiness'

By Nestor U. Torre

ON MARCH 7, ANDY Bais finally becomes an "official" film star when his movie, "Saan Nagtatago si Happiness?," starts screening at all SM digital theaters nationwide.

This development is a delight to report, albeit its being rather late in coming, because we sensed that Andy was made of stellar stuff when we first worked with him—in 1990.

CARICATURE BY LA MISTADES

BAIS. Makes his bid for movie stardom.

Initial encounter

That initial encounter took place when the Organisasyon ng Pilipinong Mang-aawit asked us to direct its annual talent discovery competition, sponsored by jeweler and arts lover, Fe S. Panlilio.

Andy was only one of the 10 finalists in the tilt, and we helped all of them come up with concepts for their individual showcases, which would then be judged by celebrity jurors.

There were quite a number of very promising talents in the group, like Gina Respal, Eladio Pamaran, Rossana, Derek Tiongco, Cathrina Lardizabal and Jake Azul, some of whom would make names for themselves both here and abroad.

Right off, it was clear to us that Andy had one of the best singing voices in the bunch, but he didn't *look* like a balladeer—so, when he came up with the usual balladeer showcase, we weren't thrilled.

Short of telling him to take a good look at himself in the mirror, we hinted that perhaps a *comedy*-musical format would be more unique, and make better use of his particular combination of aptitudes.

Musical showcase

We sensed that Andy initially resented our rather blunt "hint"—but, to his credit, he did adjust his format, and came up with "funny-pathetic" musical showcase about his falling in love with a beauty queen who didn't deign to give him the time of day!

Well, what do you know, when the finals were held, it was Andy and his unique comedy-musical showcase that wowed the celebrity judges—and they made Andy Bais the top winner of OPM's prestigious competition!

The audience was similarly delighted—but Andy was the most surprised (shocked!) person in the theater that night. Nothing like this had ever happened to him, he didn't even *dream* that he would make it as a singer-*comedian*—and yet, everybody in the theater was cheering him on!

After that, Andy still didn't quit his day job, so his performing career progressed only in fits and spurts. After he finally took the (deep) plunge, things really started happening: He became a musical-theater lead player, did stand-up, co-starred with Belinda Panelo in the musical comedy show, "Beauty and the Best," did guest spots on TV, co-hosted an educational television show—etc.!

Big hurdle

Our next big hurdle with Andy was to help him realize that he could do more than comedy. The excessively self-effacing performer couldn't see himself playing dramatic parts—until we gave him some opportunity to prove himself wrong.

Being a Visayan, he also fretted that he wouldn't sound good speaking Tagalog and English, but after a lot of lessons, those fears

ANDY/ F2

NOW SHOWING

Jackman, Winslet bring mirth and comic magic to the sewers

By Rito P. Asilo

"Flushed Away"

D: David Bowers and Sam Fell

S: Hugh Jackman, Kate Winslet, Ian McKellen, Andy Serkis and Bill Nighy

JACKMAN. Smolders with untapped passion.

AFTER PET MOUSE RODDY (voiced by Hugh Jackman) schemes to get rid of sewer rat, Sid (Shane Richie)—who comes barging into his life of pomp and privilege—his plan backfires unexpectedly: As Roddy lures the pesky newcomer to take a "dip" in the loo, with the intention of flushing Sid out of his master's house (and out of his life), he inadvertently winds up being the one flushed away—into an exciting underworld beyond his pampered but confined existence.

Underground, a bustling metropolis awaits Roddy, where he meets headstrong Rita (voiced by Kate Winslet), who's on a mission to retrieve a contentious red gem. To get back home, he hooks up with the defiant Rita, who must evade the clutches of the villainous Toad (Ian McKellen); his hapless henchrats, Spike and Whitey (Bill Nighy and Andy Serkis, respectively); his French cousin, the mercenary Le Frog (Jean Reno), and their amphibian underlings, who are hatching up an evil plan to take over London's sewers—by annihilating the dominant rodent population!

DreamWorks' David Bowers and Aardman's Sam Fell team up to combine the renowned strengths of their studios—the latter's arduous stop-frame motion photography ("Wallace and Gromit") is carefully executed by the former's expertise in CG animation ("Shrek"). (In a stop-motion film, artists create plasticine models with metal armatures that quickly "communicate" a model's facial expressions, thus the product's tactile look.)

The production takes some time to tell its story, but once it establishes its major plot points, excitement and adventure build up considerably until the film reaches its heartwarming finale.

Jackman makes full use of his musical-theater background by creating a seemingly lightweight character that actually smolders with untapped passion—a quality that his big-screen outings rarely take advantage of.

Winslet's Rita may not be as fully developed as Jackman's, but she nevertheless manages to make the streetwise rodent a sympathetic protagonist.

JACKMAN/ F2

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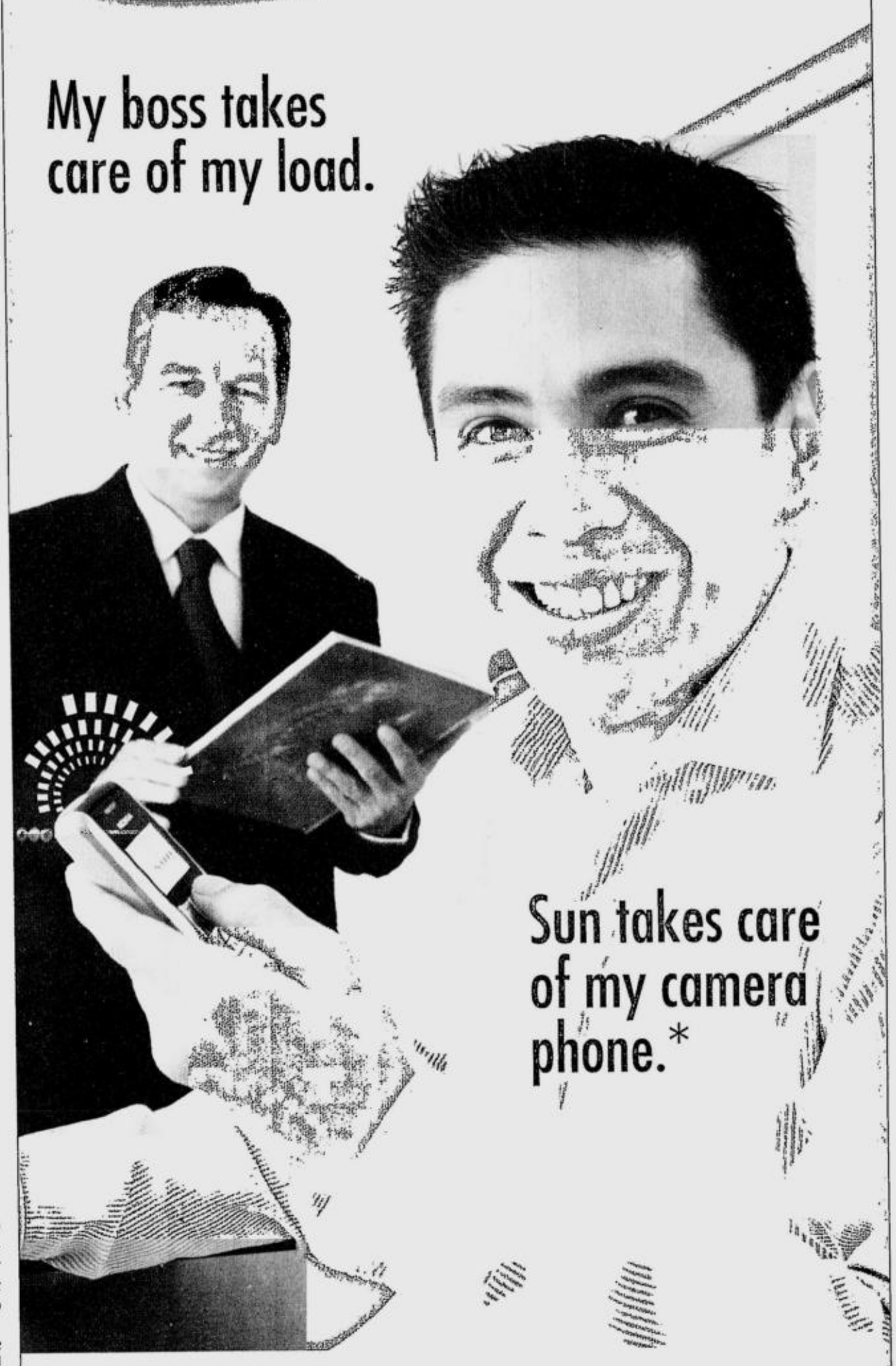

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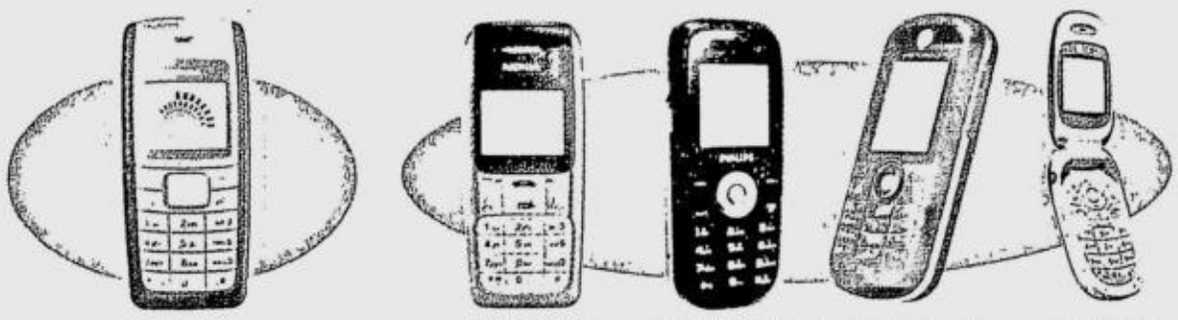

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1 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA • THX
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

2 YOU GOT ME
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 indieSine: PEPOT ARTISTA
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9.50

4 FLUSHED AWAY
1:20 3:25 5:30 7:35 9:45

5 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

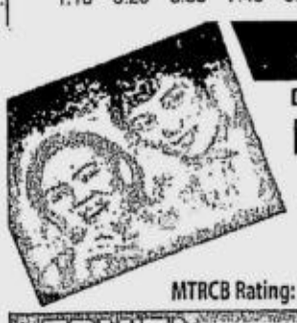
6 PRIMEVAL
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

7 KABUL EXPRESS
12:20 2:40 5:00 7:20 9:40

8 EPIC MOVIE 12:30 2:40
MUSIC and LYRICS 5:00 7:20 9:40

9 GHOST RIDER
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

10 THE NUMBER 23
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00



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2 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA 12:30 2:50
THE NUMBER 23 5:10 7:30 10:00

3 FLUSHED AWAY
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

4 EPIC MOVIE 12:00 1:40 3:20
GHOST RIDER 5:20 7:30 10:00

5 PRIMEVAL
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

6 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

7 ROME and JULIET
11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00

300

Schedule of Activities

- Visit the "300" Photo Exhibit today at the Robinsons Movieworld Galleria Cinema Lobby
- CAR STICK-ON EVENT
  Robinsons Place, Manila
  (P. Faura Wing)
  MARCH 02 (Friday)

  Robinsons Pioneer
  (EDSA to Pioneer Side)
  MARCH 03 (Saturday)
- Tune in to Wave 89.1 and get a chance to win exclusive invites to the special advance screening of "300" and for more details on its activities and promos.

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Ticket Price: P100 682-8193 · 682-8199

1 THE NUMBER 23
11:50 2.10 4:30 6:50 9:10

2 FLUSHED AWAY
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9.10

3 YOU GOT ME
11:25 1.50 4:15 6:40 9:05

4 EPIC MOVIE
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:00

5 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA
12.50 2.50 4.50 6:50 9.00

6 GHOST RIDER
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:30 9:00

7 PRIMEVAL
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10

8 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

NOVALICHES
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1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 EPIC MOVIE
6 GHOST RIDER

PIONEER
Ticket Price: P102 / 687-5378

1 PRIMEVAL
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 8:40

2 FLUSHED AWAY
12:20 2:25 4:30 6:35 8:40

3 YOU GOT ME
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40

4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
2:15 4:25 6:35 8:40

STA. ROSA
Ticket Price: P75 / 80 (049) 837-0907

1 PRIMEVAL
2 THE FOUNTAIN
3 TROIKA
4 YOU GOT ME

LIPA
Ticket Price: (043) 757-3884 P 90 (043) 312-5870

1 GHOST RIDER
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE CLEANER
4 TROIKA
5 BABEL

DASMARINAS
Ticket Price: P75 / 80 (046) 416-4332

1 BOA
2 MUSIC and LYRICS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PRIMEVAL

ANGELES
Ticket Price: P 90 (045) 892-2348

1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 TROIKA
4 THE FOUNTAIN

IMUS
Ticket Price: P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 PRIMENVAL
2 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
3 YOU GOT ME
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING

STARMILLS
Ticket Price: P75 / 80 (045) 875-1927

1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 TROIKA
3 THE PROMISE
4 YOU GOT ME
5 PRIMEVAL
6 GHOST RIDER

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2 THE MESSENGERS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 GHOST RIDER
5 PRIMEVAL
6 APOCALYPTO

ILOILO
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4 APOCALYPTO
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4 FLUSHED AWAY/ EPIC MOVIE
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
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IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
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1 NUMBER 23
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
5 THE PROMISE
6 PRIMEVAL
7 GHOST RIDER
8 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
9 EPIC MOVIE
10 FLUSHED AWAY
11 YOU GOT ME
12 YOU GOT ME

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 PRIMEVAL
2 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
3 GHOST RIDER
4 RESERVED
5 THE PROMISE
6 FLUSHED AWAY
7 EPIC MOVIE
8 THE MESSENGERS
9 YOU GOT ME
10 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
11 NUMBER 23
12 MUSIC AND LYRICS

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
2 YOU GOT ME
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 GHOST RIDER
5 EPIC MOVIE
6 PRIMEVAL
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 YOU GOT ME
9 THE PROMISE
10 THE MESSENGERS
11 NUMBER 23
12 FLUSHED AWAY

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 YOU GOT ME
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PRIMEVAL
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 EPIC MOVIE
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 THE PROMISE
9 NUMBER 23
10 MUSIC AND LYRICS

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 YOU GOT ME

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 YOU GOT ME
2 PRIMEVAL
3 GHOST RIDER
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 EPIC MOVIE
7 NUMBER 23
8 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
9 THE PROMISE

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 GHOST RIDER

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 PRIMEVAL
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 THE HOLIDAY
5 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
6 GHOST RIDER
7 FLUSHED AWAY
8 MUSIC AND LYRICS
9 YOU GOT ME
10 THE MESSENGERS
11 NUMBER 23
12 THE PROMISE

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1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 MUSIC AND LYRICS
4 GHOST RIDER

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 PRIMEVAL
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 NUMBER 23
4 YOU GOT ME

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2 PRIMEVAL
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4 GHOST RIDER

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8 FLUSHED AWAY

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2 GHOST RIDER
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 THE PROMISE
5 YOU GOT ME
6 YOU GOT ME

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1 PRIMEVAL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE PROMISE
4 GHOST RIDER

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1 BABEL
2 YOU GOT ME
3 GHOST RIDER
4 THE HOLIDAY

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1 GHOST RIDER
2 PRIMEVAL
3 THE PROMISE
4 THE FOUNTAIN
5 YOU GOT ME
6 YOU GOT ME

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 BABEL
2 GHOST RIDER
3 YOU GOT ME
4 THE CLEANER

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 YOU GOT ME
2 BABEL
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 YOU GOT ME
2 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PRIMEVAL

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 YOU GOT ME
2 GHOST RIDER
3 THE PROMISE
4 NUMBER 23

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 GHOST RIDER
2 THE PROMISE
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PRIMEVAL
4 FLUSHED AWAY
5 MUSIC AND LYRICS
6 THE PROMISE
7 YOU GOT ME
8 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

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SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 MUSIC AND LYRICS
2 RESERVED
3 PRIMEVAL
4 YOU GOT ME
5 GHOST RIDER
6 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
7 RESERVED
8 THE MESSENGERS

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 PRIMEVAL
2 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4 YOU GOT ME
5 THE CLEANER
6 GHOST RIDER

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2 YOU GOT ME
3 THE CLEANER
4 PRIMEVAL

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Andy...

From page F1

were also put to rest.

Little by little, he saw the wisdom in our belief that a performer should be able to do *everything*.

The next stumbling block was acting for the movie camera. Andy had played cameos in some of Robbie Tan's films, but a *lead* role was inconceivable to him. —Until we did a workshop in film acting, and producer Rica Arevalo persuaded Andy to take his biggest step to date and play the lead in the Cinemalaya entry, "Saan Nagtatago si Happiness?"

Rica could have cast an established singer-comedian in the attention-calling role, but she too chose Andy because she too believed in him.

Potential

That made us realize that there were quite a number of people out there who, like us, saw Andy's potential and were ready to help him realize it.

The question was, would the movie audience respond as positively? When "Happiness" opened during the 2006 Cinemalaya festival at the CCP, it surprised many people with its very strong showing.

In fact, additional screenings had to be arranged, and the comedy-drama-musical movie ended up as a festival crowd-drawer.

But, that was with the *festival* audience. How well will it do with the mainstream viewer? The answer to that is forthcoming next week, when the movie starts its run at SM malls' digital theaters.

Discovery

Andy shares the screen with another discovery, child singer-actress Mica, plus Nanette Inventor, Ricky Davao, Rez Cortez, Lou Veloso, Caridad Sanchez, Darling Lavinia and January Isaac.

Together, they bring to life the film's theme about happiness waiting in the most unexpected places, and how we can help each other find our own brilliant rainbow after a rinsing cloudburst.

We hope that the movie will help you find your own measure of happiness. Slowly but surely, in realizing how a performer brings joy to his audience, Andy Bais has found his!

Jackman

From page F1

Roddy and Rita try to ward off the shady, sinister toads brought to scorching life by McKellen, Nighy, Serkis and Reno.

Who would have thought Jackman, Winslet and company could bring mirth and comic magic to the sewers? But, they achieve just that—with a lot of help from the green and brown, slimy, singing slugs, who act as the movie's egregiously bad *but* hilariously effective Greek chorus. Together, they pack a comic wallop.

So, as you can see, going down the drain isn't *always* a bad thing!

A chapel rises in Tukon

TUKON, A VILLAGE ON TOP OF a mountain, is a small community in Batanes that boasts of breathtaking views of two great bodies of water: The Pacific Ocean and the South China Sea. It's almost three kilometers away from Basco, the capital of Batanes.

To attend church service and socio-cultural events, Tukon's residents—the older ones, especially—have a difficult time hurdling the long walk to Basco. And travel becomes even more problematic during typhoon months.

Activities

As a result, civic leaders led by Dina and Butch Abad thought of constructing a chapel that would double up as the community's center for activities.

The Tukon Chapel is almost 70 percent completed, with the help of volunteers who support the project. Its organizers are seeking financial assistance to complete the chapel.

Recently, a 15-course *degustacion* dinner was hosted by Kathleen Lior-Liechtenstein to raise funds for the chapel.

Also, a special 25.5-inch wood-and-spring steel clip clock, which displays 12 of our colored photographs of Batanes, is now on sale to help raise money for the project. Call 0917 882-9009 or 899-1767, or visit our studio at Rm. 227, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia st., Bel Air II, Makati City. Or, you can make a donation to PNB-Basco S/A 612-515774-0 at any PNB branch.

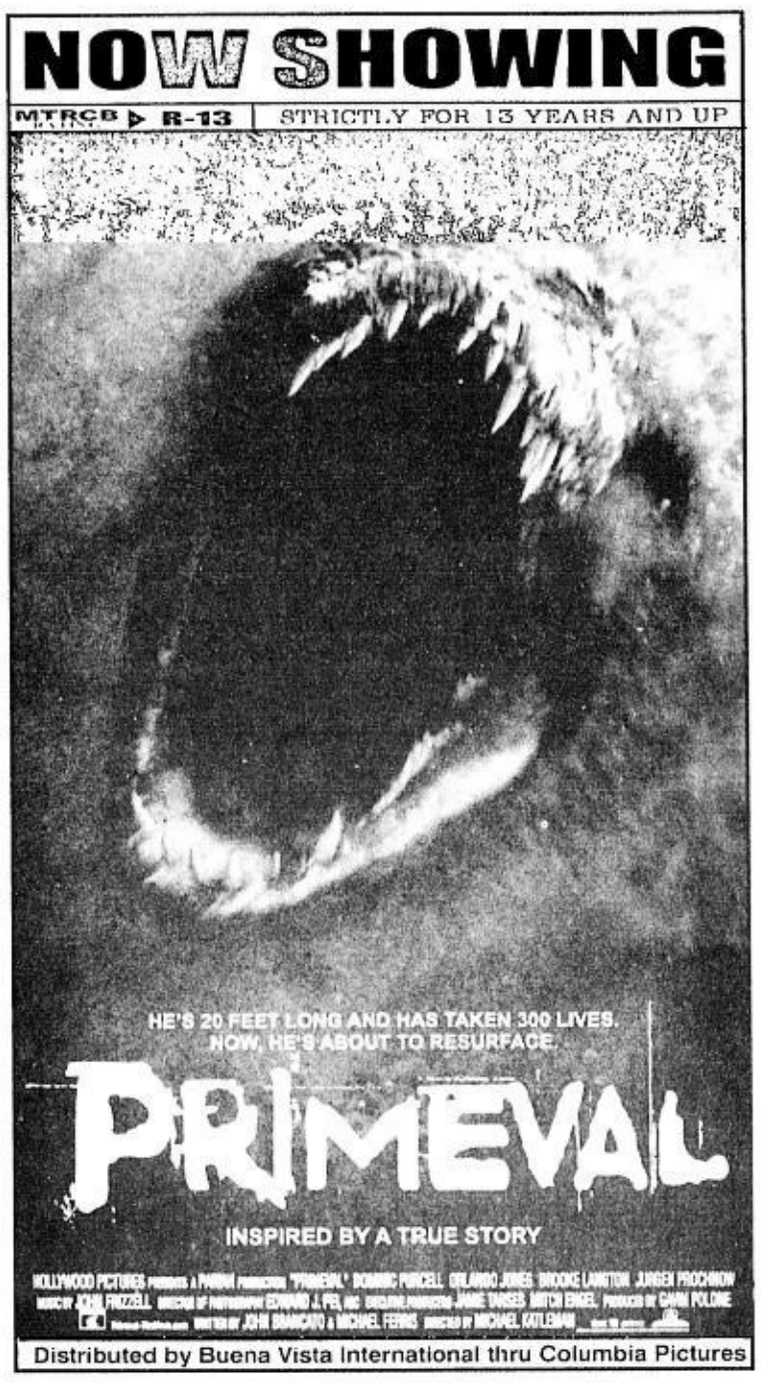
Last year, the photo exhibit *cum* auction at Rockwell generated enough to money to restore the Cabcaben House in Barangay Tuhel.

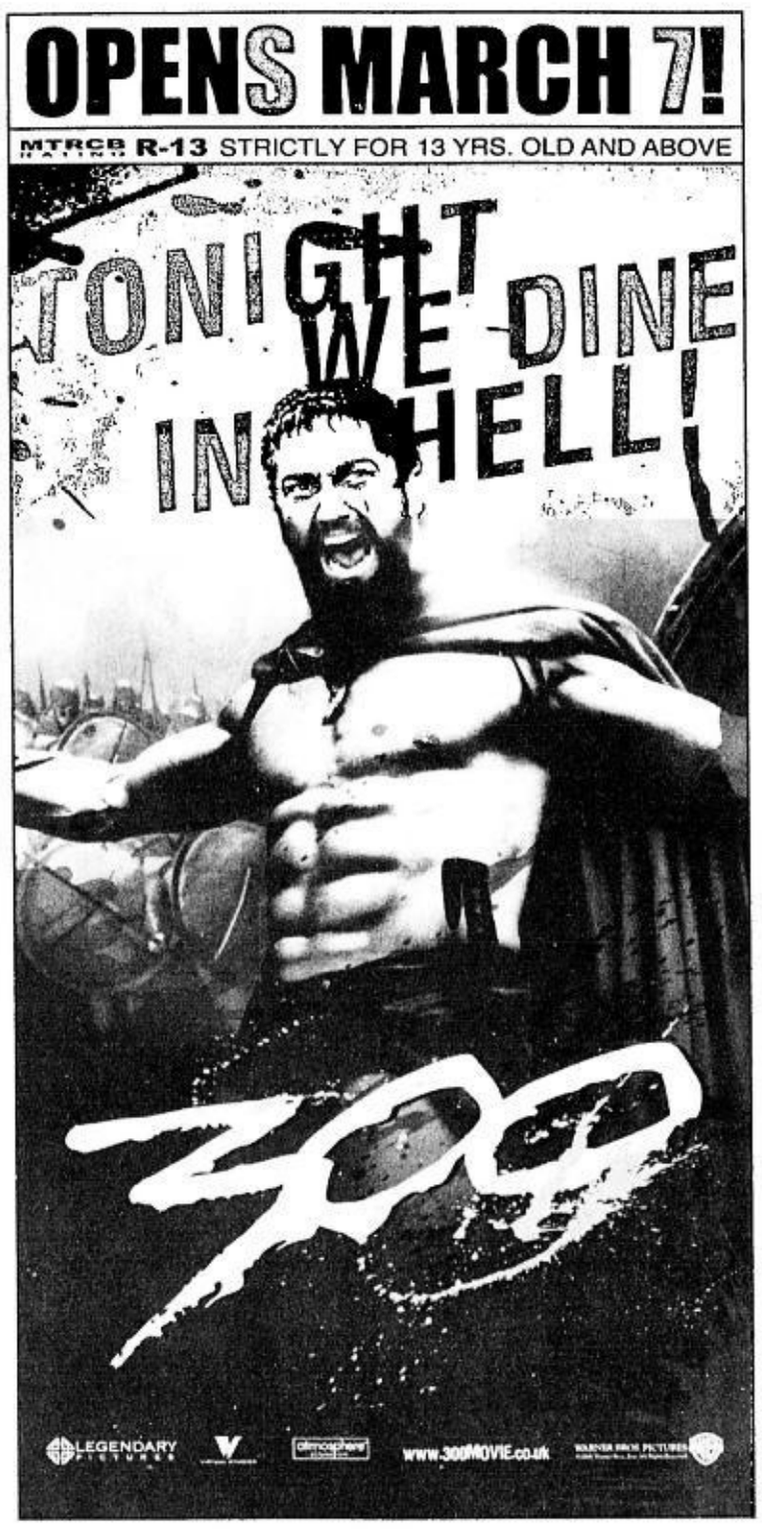
This year, the Batanes Heritage

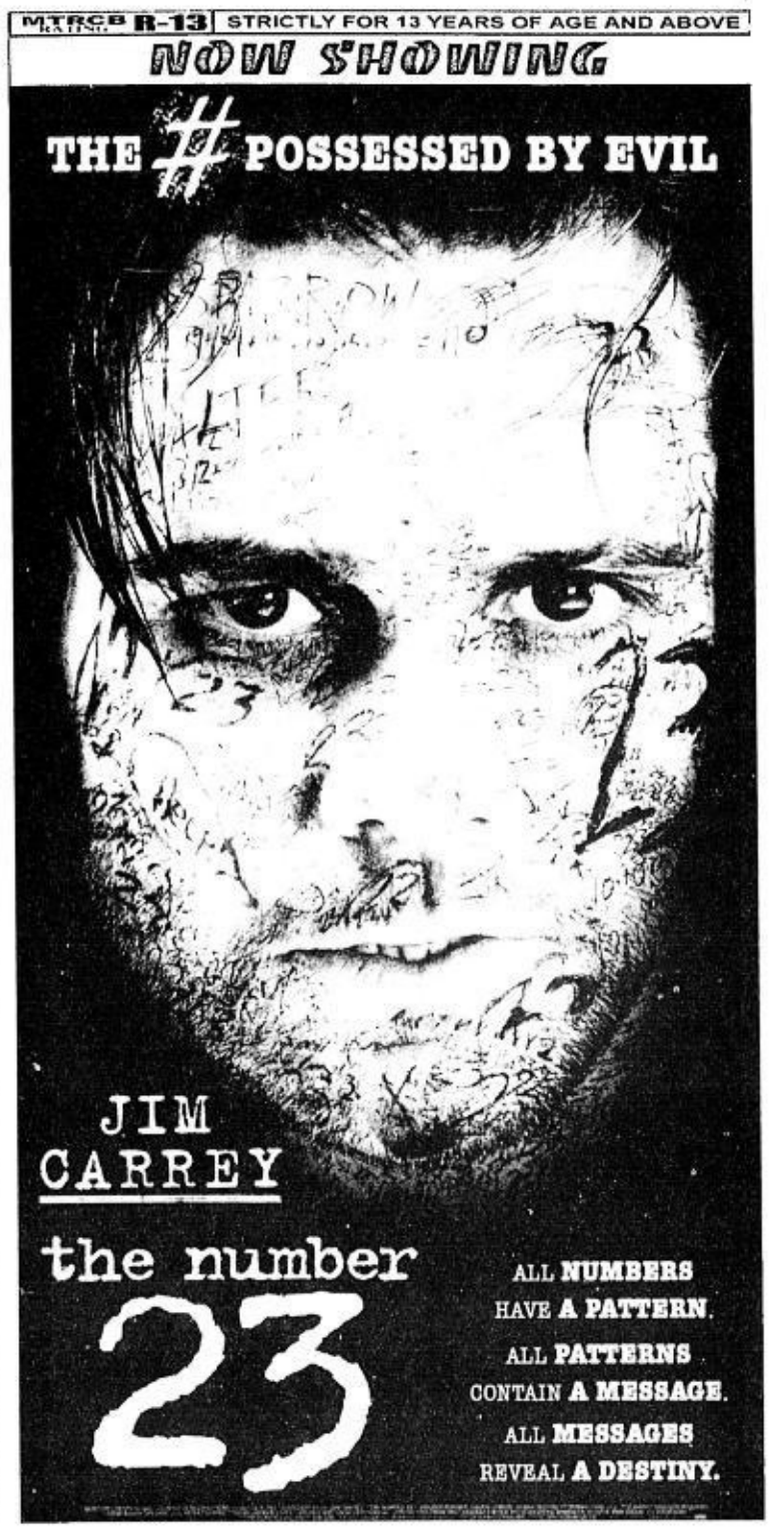
A CHAPEL/ F4

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero







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	3 FLUSHED AWAY	4 MUSIC & LYRICS	5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING	
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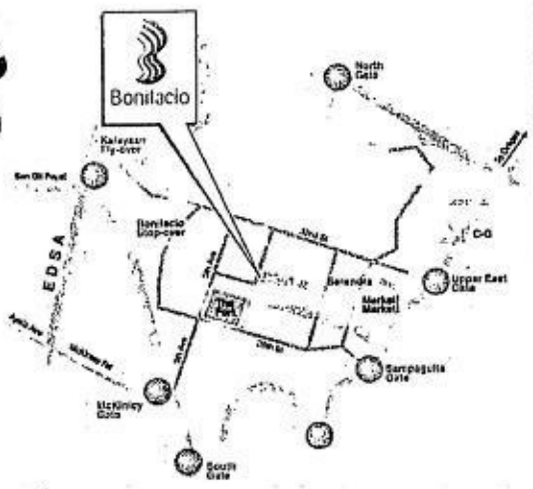

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Charming leads buoy up predictable rom-com

By Noelani Torre

IN THE ROM-COM, "IT'S A BOY GIRL Thing," Woody Deane (Kevin Zegers) is the football-minded school hunk and Nell Bedworth (Samaire Armstrong) is the Yale-minded school geek.

Woody and Nell are next-door neighbors who hate each other. One morning, after having argued the previous day in front of a statue of a mischievous Mayan sorcerer god, they wake up in each other's bodies!

ZEGERS AND ARMSTRONG. A lot of laughs for their gender-bending efforts.

Plot

This kind of plot pops up so regularly in movies (especially in films aimed for teens) that it has birthed its own sub-genre: The body-swapper. Body-swappers always end up with the two main characters learning important lessons in life.

In the film, Woody and Nell don't just end up with a moral—they also end up with each other. Sorry about the spoiler, but, really, weren't you expecting *that* already?

The movie doesn't win points for originality, though there's an interesting turn early on in the movie when Woody and Nell set out to destroy each other's lives.

As Woody, she breaks up with his cheerleader girlfriend and causes his masculinity to be questioned. As Nell, he messes up her performance in class and gives her the reputation of a slut.

The ways they get back at each other are amusing, but they all end far too soon when the filmmakers decide to get back on the more conventional track.

Characters

Most of the enjoyment you'll get from this teen comedy is from the charming performances of its two hard-working leads. Armstrong has a ball swishing around in heels and a miniskirt. She captures a cocky young man's walk and talk very well—so well, in fact, that, when their characters are back in their bodies, you start thinking that her version of Woody is more credible than Zegers'!

Zegers also gets a lot of laughs by changing his walk and talk, but is particularly hilarious when, for example, he sits down to take care of a certain bodily function normally performed standing up—when he inexpertly (but effectively) beats up another guy.

Amusing exchanges

Despite the characters' fairly amusing exchanges, however, the movie steers a course that has already been well-charted by previous films, and the lack of surprises makes it rather forgettable.

You won't sleep your way through this one, but you won't give it another thought after it's over. And by the way, Sharon Osbourne makes a cameo, and Elton John is credited as one of the executive producers—which explains why his songs are played three times in the movie.

MERCADO AND LAZARO. Topbill local adaptation of French comedy series.

Are local viewers ready for 'Camera Café'?

By Rica Arevalo

ON MY RECENT TRIP TO CEBU, I was invited by cinematographer Lee Meily to visit her at Big Foot, one of the country's "real" sound studios. Her husband, director Mark Meily, is shooting "Camera Café," a local adaptation of the successful French TV comedy series.

Mark recalls, "'Camera Café,' an episode of which runs from three and a half to five minutes, debuted in France initially as a filler between news breaks during the week of the Sept. 11, 2001, tragedy. The series became an unexpected success because its punchlines were snappy, short and straight to the point."

Rigorous

In the dressing room, I saw Gabe Mercado, Giselle Sanchez, Tado, Jojo Alejar, Joy Viado, Lou Veloso, Gary Lim, Paul Sy and Ronnie Lazaro, who all passed the rigorous, three-week audition process.

I met producer Henri Delorme, who shared his views on the day's shoot. The French producer was so engrossed with the local adaptation that he knew everybody's lines and blocking.

Version

Henri even acted them out in front of everyone! He started as a writer for the French version of "Saturday Night Live" before he became a producer.

In "Camera Café," *Pinoy* humor is evident in the dialogue. The series takes place in an office, made more colorful by its unique characters.

It has been adapted in more than 20 countries all over Europe, North America, South America and, most recently, Asia. The Filipino series will be shown on Asian TV networks this summer.

Learning through time

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

THERE'S A CHINESE saying that goes, "A horse's strength is known by the distance it travels; a person's heart is revealed through time."

Many people judge a person's character based on a single encounter. They trust quickly and give their heart to strangers. They meet a person today and marry him the next day!

Then, tragedy strikes when they realize they *don't* really know each other: The knight in shining armor turns out to be a cruel wife beater and child molester, while the princess is a compulsive nag.

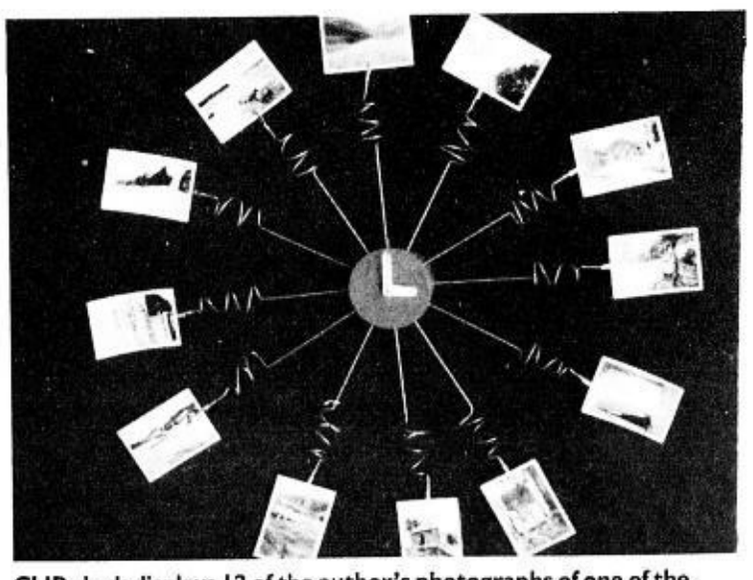
The passage of time allows us to get to know people more. We hear their ideas and become part of their activities. A person's real character unravels everyday.

Words

As we go beyond physical features, economic status or educational background, we see what's deep in his heart. With words, we see if he's kind, truthful, sincere, caring, nurturing and wise.

We shouldn't commit ourselves to a relationship *unless* we know the other person well enough. Familiarity requires time, a person's track record is built through it.

We see what a man is like by the footprints he leaves behind. To avoid failures, take the *time* to learn more about the other person.



CLIP clock displays 12 of the author's photographs of one of the country's most picturesque provinces.

A chapel rises...

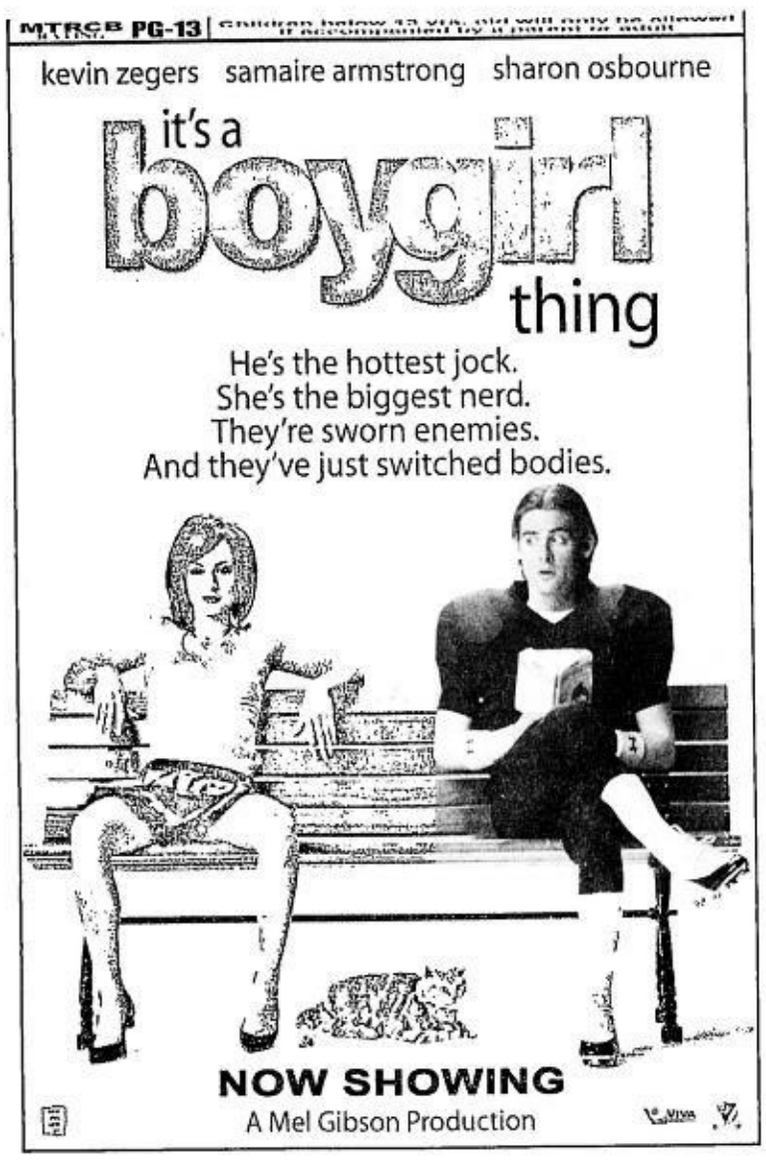
From page F3

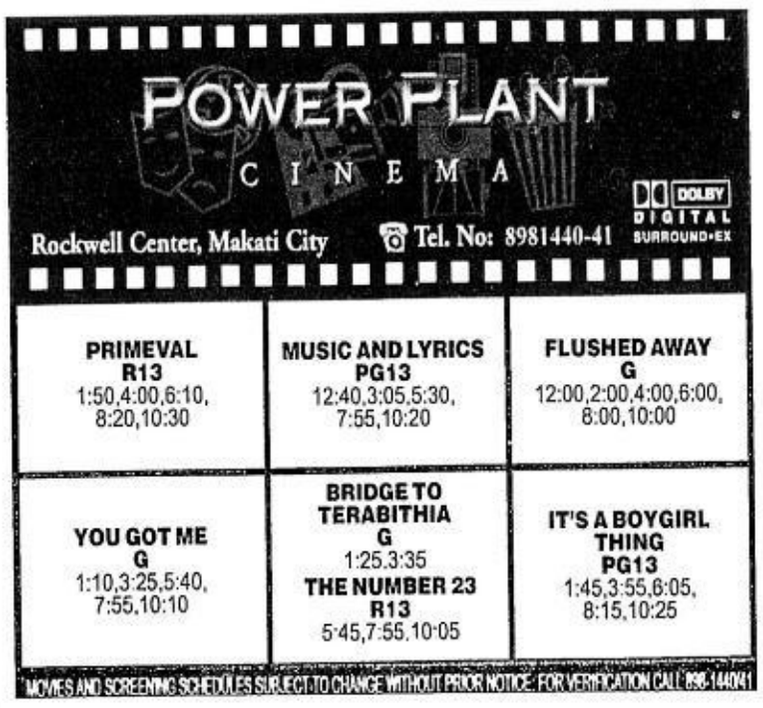
Foundation hopes to restore 10 structures—three in Basco, one in Mahatao, two in Ivana, three in Uyugan, and three in Sabtang.

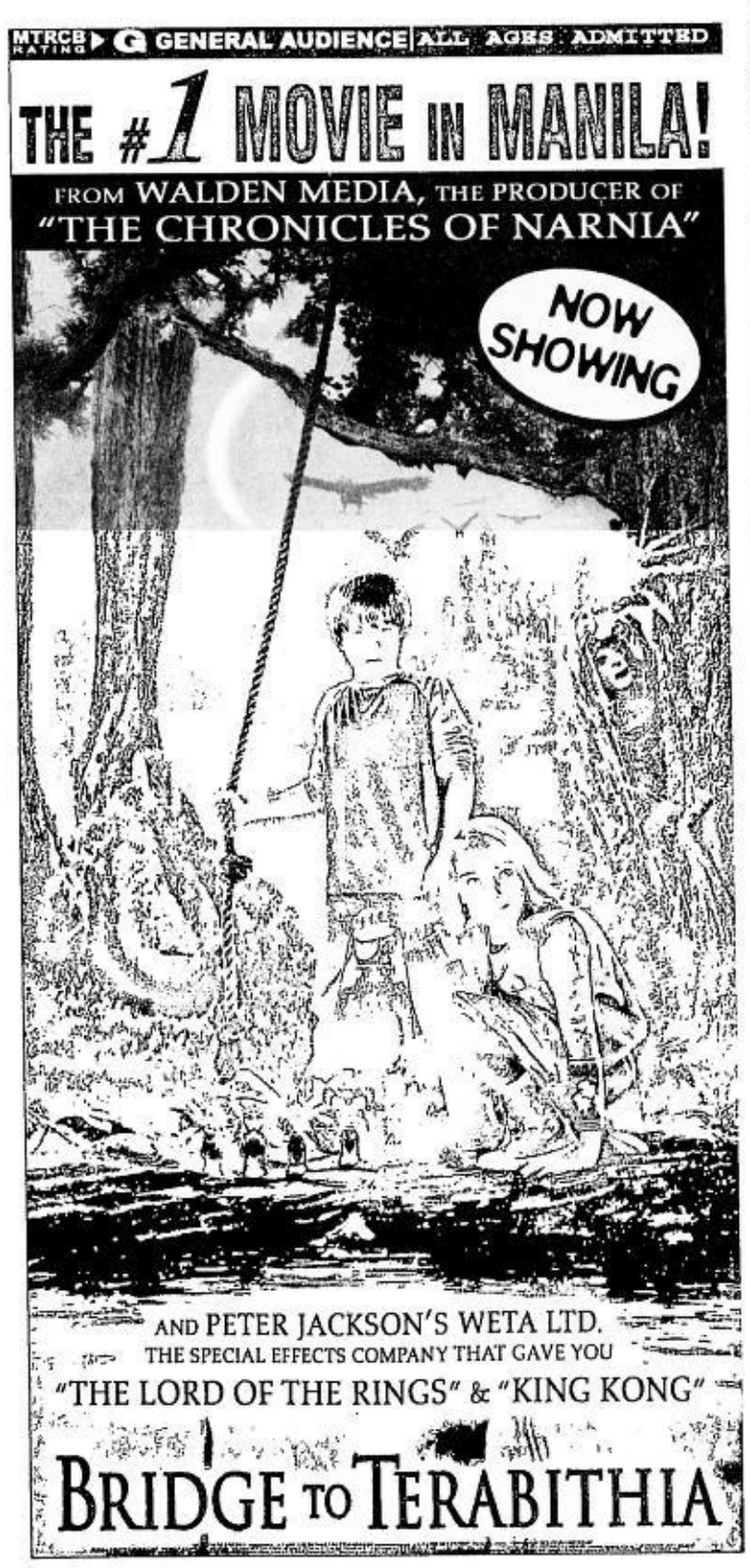
The restored houses will be used for various purposes: Bread and breakfast accommodations, community centers, and art workshop venues. (Donate to PNB-Batasan, Batanes Heritage Foundation, Inc. c/a 227830088-1.)

Join our Batanes Photo Safari, scheduled from April 12 to 15 and from May 6 to 9, courtesy of Asian Spirit and Batanes Seaside Lodge and Restaurant.

E-mail us at mandynavasero@yahoo.com.ph, or call 896-3208.







SATURDAY *Special*

DANIEL RADCLIFFE *takes it all off*

By Nestor U. Torre

DANIEL RADCLIFFE, THE movies' quintessential child wiz and hero, has thrown his fans for a loop by radically changing his image as a performer at only 17 years of age.

Most former child stars ease into adolescent and teen idol roles before essaying daring parts, but Radcliffe has jump-started the process by agreeing to go nude in the current West End revival of Peter Shaffer's acclaimed drama, "Equus."

Radical transformation

Expectedly, his bosses in the "Harry Potter" film franchise are unhappy about their former boy wonder's radical transformation. In his next appearance as Potter, the sexiest thing he does is to kiss a girl, so going nude and engaging in steamy love scenes in the buff onstage is much too adult a career shift that could compromise the development of Radcliffe's signature screen persona.

Why did Radcliffe do it? Perhaps for artistic reasons—to a performing artist, nudity need *not* be a major no-no, if it's what a role requires.

The controversy engendered by such a peremptory move could also be a consideration. It has definitely removed the onus of predictability from the actor's performing persona, and thrust him at the forefront of the most adventurous young stars in entertainment!

Its financial rewards similarly cannot be gainsaid: It has boosted advance ticket sales for "Equus" to £3 million—a *very* big deal on the West End. That means the play can be performed for many months, with full houses at every performance.

Decision

Whatever factor played a key role in Radcliffe's "rad" (for radical) decision, he's in no danger now of being typecast in goody-goody roles, which could have happened if he chose to play only Harry Potter-type parts for years on end. To the young actor, that could be a huge relief, and well worth the controversy his unexpected transformation has engendered.

Incidentally, "Equus" was produced by Repertory Philippines many years ago, and we were able to watch one of its performances at the Insular Life Theater in Makati.

Guess who played Radcliffe's role in the Philippine production? —Leo Martinez! His leading lady, who also went nude, was an American actress.

The production generated a lot of controversy because it was so daring, especially in the '70s. But, the production was quite above-board and promoted as a for-adults-only show, so the audience took its nude scenes in stride.

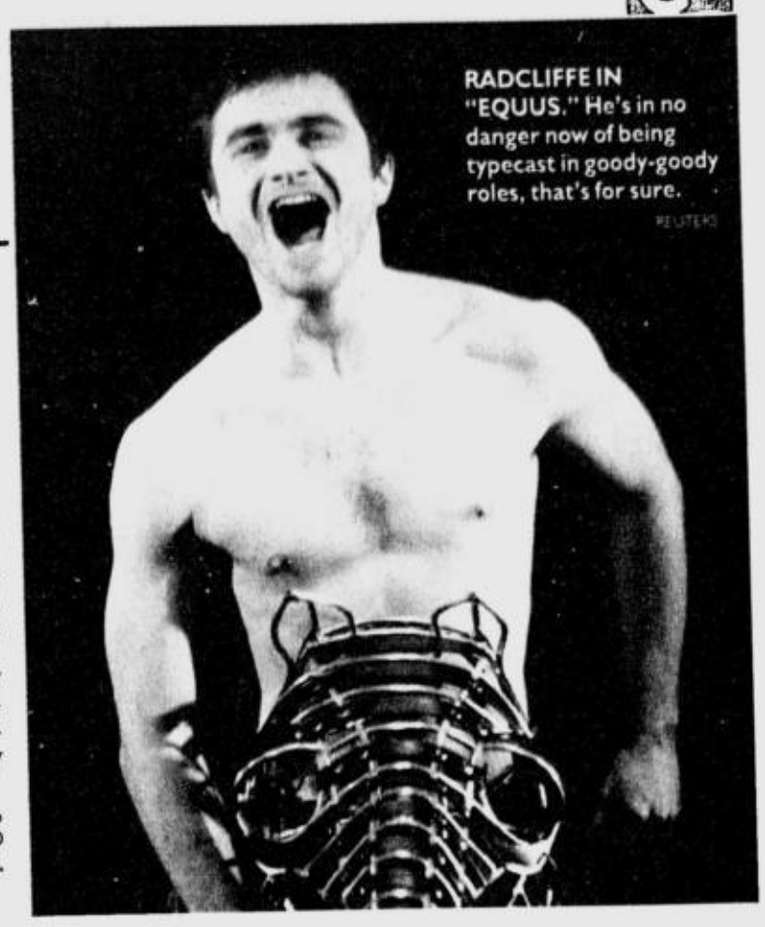
An interesting aside: We watched "Equus" with the husband of the American actress in the show—and he confessed that he was more nervous about her taking all her clothes off onstage than his wife was!

Focused portrayal

As for Leo, he got kidded endlessly for having the daring to "reveal his shortcomings," but he gamely laughed off such taunts and came up with an unselfconscious and focused portrayal of the play's sensitive and troubled young protagonist.

Leo and his co-star proved that the nudity in "Equus" was not gratuitous, and their focused performances conditioned the audience to also react to the play with maturity and good judgement.

We don't doubt that, in the West End revival, Daniel Radcliffe and his own leading lady are also keeping their production on a high artistic level. And so, on with the show!



RADCLIFFE IN "EQUUS." He's in no danger now of being typecast in goody-goody roles, that's for sure. REUTERS

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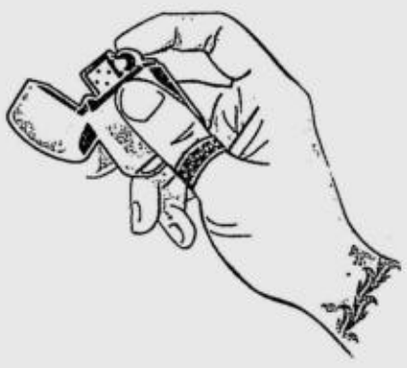

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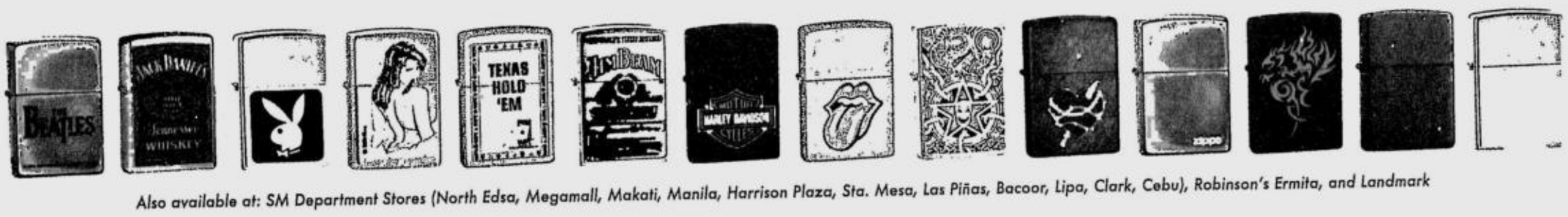

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Better late than never for Alan Arkin

HOLLYWOOD—ALAN ARKIN'S 28-year wait for an Academy Award ended on Sunday, after his turn as the foul-mouthed, drug-snorting grandpa in "Little Miss Sunshine" was rewarded with a best supporting actor Oscar.

Arkin, 72, expressed appreciation for the reception given to the sleeper film, which, he said, "in these fragmented times, speaks so openly of the possibility of innocence, growth and connection."

ARKIN. The 28-year wait is over! REUTERS

Allegations

Born in March 1934 in New York, Arkin grew up in Brooklyn before his family relocated to Los Angeles in the 1950s. His parents were both accused of being Communists during the witch hunts of the McCarthy era, allegations which cost his father his job.

Arkin, who had been taking acting lessons from an early age, won scholarships to various Los Angeles drama colleges before dropping out to form a folk music band, The Tarriers, in 1955.

The group had a hit with 1956's "The Banana Boat Song," and he continued to pursue a music career, as well as acting for the next decade.

Broadway debut

Arkin had appeared on the big screen for the first time with The Tarriers in 1957's "Calypso Heat Wave." Acting stints with theater groups in St. Louis and Chicago came before he debuted on Broadway in "From the Second City," which led to a role in the acclaimed comedy, "Enter Laughing," for which he won a Tony.

In a rare feat, Arkin earned a best actor Oscar nomination for his first feature acting role, playing the Soviet sailor Rozanov, who is mistaken for a spy in the 1966 comedy "The Russians are Coming, The Russians are Coming."

That was followed by appearances in 1967's "Wait Until Dark," opposite Audrey Hepburn, and 1968's "The Heart is a Lonely Hunter," for which he received his second Oscar nomination.

Best-selling novel

Many critics believe the best performance of Arkin's career came in 1970's "Catch 22," the film adaptation of Joseph Heller's best-selling novel.

Arkin appeared regularly on the ligitimate stage, television and the big screen from the 1970s to the '90s, with notable roles in "Edward Scissorhands," "Grosse Pointe Blank" (1997) and "Jakob the Liar" (1999).

He took it upon himself to create his "Little Miss Sunshine" character's back story, deciding that Grandpa Hoover should be a washed-up former saxophonist with a penchant for strip clubs and drugs.

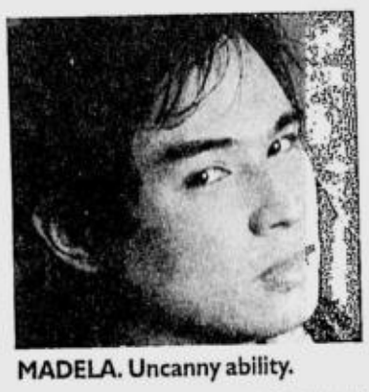
Disreputable characters

"I love disreputable characters who spout philosophy," Arkin says. "He's completely out there—wide open and nuts." Married three times, Arkin now lives in New Mexico and eschews the spotlight whenever possible.

Arkin's idea of heaven is to "stay home for three months, living as quietly as humanly possible." He bested Jackie Earle Haley ("Little Children"), Djimon Hounsou ("Blood Diamond"), Eddie Murphy ("Dreamgirls") and Mark Wahlberg ("The Departed") to take home the prized Oscars statuette. *AFP*

Musical magic and nostalgia come together in 'Journey to Hope'

By Rito P. Asilo



MADELA. Uncanny ability.

ESCALANTE. Vocal powerhouse.

KARYLLE. Strong presence.

IF YOU'RE A CONCERT ENTHUSIAST and a theater buff, you can hit two birds with one stone by watching the special show, "Journey to Hope," on March 16, 8 p.m. at the AFP Theater, when the Jesuit Volunteers of the Philippines (JVP) gather some of the country's most talented performers—Jed Madela, Karylle and Bituin Escalante—to render some of the best songs from Broadway, West End and original Filipino musicals.

"Philippine Idol" finalist Drae Ybanez and soprano Nenen Espina will join Bituin, Karylle and Jed in JVP's special night of music and nostalgia as it celebrates its 25th year this year.

Unwavering commitment

After two decades of service and unwavering commitment, JVP remains steadfast in its mission to assist under-resourced institutions all over the country by fielding young professionals to do volunteer work in far-flung rural communities.

The group will also look back at what it has achieved all these years as it looks forward to many more years of fulfilling service to the country's underprivileged.

For us, what makes the concert a must-watch event is the exciting lineup of show-stopping numbers that only singers with powerful pipes can give justice to.

Of course, Jed has the uncanny ability to make even the simplest of songs a show-stopping number—without resorting to the eardrum-smashing vocal excesses of many other singing champs.

If you have a copy of Jed's recent album, "Songs Rediscovered," and have heard his version of "Home" (from "The Wiz"), you know what we mean.

For the concert, Jed will sing some of our personal favorites (read: songs with a considerable degree of difficulty to sing)—from "Gethsemane" (from the pop-rock musical, "Jesus Christ Superstar") and "Anthem" ("Chess") to "This is the Moment" ("Jeckyll and Hyde") and "Impossible Dream" ("The Man of La Mancha").

Stage version

Bituin impressed us long before she wowed theatergoers in "Rent," and before she recorded her signature hit song, "Kung Ako na Lang Sana." We first saw Bito nine years ago, when she appeared in her theatrical debut—in NUT's staging of "Sino Ka Ba, Jose Rizal?" for Musical Theater Philippines—using her real name, Bituin Aguiluz. Then, we worked with her in the stage version of Jullie Yap-Daza's "Etiquette for Mistresses," alongside Robert Seña, Jenine Desiderio and former MTV VJ, Belinda Panelo.

In the concert, she will revisit a song ("I'm Changing") from her critically-acclaimed turn in a local staging of "Dreamgirls," where she played Effie White, the coveted role that just won for Jennifer Hudson a best supporting actress Oscar last Sunday. Also not to be missed is Bito's surprise number from an acclaimed original Filipino musical.

Children's musical

Karylle, who impressed theater lovers with her strong stage presence and beautiful singing in the children's musical, "The Little Mermaid," will cover "On My Own" ("Les Miserables"). We have mentioned eight songs so far—and we're not even halfway through the repertoire!

Supporting Jed, Bito, Karylle, Andre and Nenen is a formidable production team that includes musical director Bobby Velaco and his four-man band, JVP's Joseph Uy, light designer Martin Esteva, Tcel Maramag, Julius Aguilar, Rona de Lim, Jaybee Rocutan and Kang Sonza.

Call 426-5908, or TicketWorld at 891-9999.

Mr. Shooli returns

By Behn Cervantes

PEOPLE WHO REMEMBER THE local films of the '50s have fond memories of Manuel Conde's "Juan Tamad" series.

The esteemed LVN director scored quite a feat when his movie, "Genghis Khan," an epic film produced on a third-world budget, reaped critical praise from international filmmakers at the Venice Film Festival.

Conde gained early respect for Filipino films in the festival circuit. His contemporary, Lamberto Avellana, likewise made a name for himself in the Asian circuit for productions like "Korea," "Anak Dalita" and "Badjao."

Meaningful

Years later, the movies of Lino Brocka, Ishmael Bernal and Mike de Leon followed suit. These days, young, independent filmmakers continue to gain global respect for Filipino films *via* inexpensive but meaningful films.

While Conde directed spectacular epics like "Genghis Khan," he was also the star, director and scriptwriter of a successful political satire series, "Juan Tamad."

He infused the legendary character with modern political attitudes. The series taught the audience invaluable lessons because its gags were very topical.

Dormant

Of late, that kind of socio-political commentary in local films has been dormant, although stand-up comedians like Willie Nepomuceno, Jon Santos, Tessie Tomas, Mitch Valdes and Leo Martinez have been at it for years onstage. The Apo Hiking Society composed songs in the same vein.

Jun Urbano is Manuel Conde's junior. His brand of humor preceded those of Gary Lising's. He is recognized for his comedic talent.

In the '80s, he created Mr. Shooli, a Mongolian character who was astounded by the Philippines and its people. Although he truly admired *Pinoy* hospitality and optimism, this *dayuhan* (outsider) couldn't comprehend why we couldn't get our act together. I would often cut engagements short to catch Shooli's latest misadventures on TV.

URBANO. Social commentary through comedy.

Mr. Shooli predated Hollywood's tactless foreigner, Borat. His dilemma about *Pinoys* were parallel to Borat's confusion about the American way of life.

Bothered by our people's proclivity for *trapos*, basketball celebrities, and actors in the political arena, Jun has decided to do a movie that would center on PBA—politics, *basketbol* and *artista*. Urbano's timely satire will be shown just as the nation is about to engage in electoral "fun and games" involving those PBAs!

Point of view

Jun co-stars with Leo Martinez in "Mistakes of the Nation Address Yaya!" His Mongolian point of view will be bolstered by Atty. Manhik Manaog's obviously *probinsyano* political pragmatism.

Jun sought the assistance of family and friends to produce the film. His friends in the industry gladly accepted cameo roles to further enliven a cinematic endeavor that enriches as much as it educates.

NUTINI AND VALENCIA. Release latest recordings.

Mr. & Ms. goes online

THIS MONTH, YOU CAN view Mr. & Ms, magazine at www.mrandmsmagazine.com in its entirety—and for free! The digital copy is the acclaimed publication's way of yet again being in step with the times and acknowledging the need to be available everywhere in the world.

Aptly named Mr. & Ms. Active Mag Online, the digital edition has a highly interactive format enriched with multimedia and hyperlinks.

With Richard Gutierrez and Angel Locsin on the cover, the issue features articles on exciting summer activities, the local massage known as *hilot*, spas, spirit guides, Helena and Constantine, ghosts, and colorful sights in the metro.

MONTAGE For local readers, get the printed copy of Mr. & Ms. to get discounts on spa services.

ACCLAIMED mag now has a digital edition.

CineVita Film Fest

Laurice Guillen will deliver the keynote address during the opening ceremonies of UST's CineVita Film Festival on March 7. The three-day festival will screen movies of various genres, starting with Brillante Mendoza's "Manoro," and including Rica Arevalo's "ICU Bed #7," Jeffrey Jeturian's "Kubrador," Milo Tolentino's "Orasyon," John Foppe's "Armed with Hope," and "The Jeweler's Shop," a film based on a play by Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II). Admission is free. Call 406-1611 loc. 8235, or log on to www.varsitarian.com.

Kids' Choice Awards

Justin Timberlake will host Nickelodeon's 20th Annual Kids' Choice Awards on March 31, when kids honor their favorites in film, music, sports and television in a star-studded live telecast.

This year's list abounds with dual nods, such as "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" for Favorite Movie, and its star, Johnny Depp, for Favorite Male Movie Star.

"Drake & Josh" and "The Suite Life of Zack and Cody," and their respective stars, Drake Bell and Cole Sprouse, made the list for Favorite TV Show and Favorite Male TV Star.

Beyoncé is nominated for Favorite Female Singer and Favorite Song ("Irreplaceable"), while "SpongeBob SquarePants" made it for Favorite Cartoon and Favorite Video Game ("SpongeBob SquarePants: Creature from the Krusty Krab")—etc.!

Nickelodeon celebrates the 20th KCA year with a special retrospective, "Deep Inside the KCAs," on March 16, hosted by Emma Roberts.

Gina, Pinky and Missy reunite in 'TVM Filipino'

Join three of the New Voice Company's top actresses, Gina Alajar, Pinky Amador and Missy Maramara, when they reunite for a special staging of the Filipino version of the critically-acclaimed hit production, Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues," under Rito Asilo's direction.

The show will be held at the Philippine Trade Center on March 6, Tuesday at 6 p.m. for the Philippine NGO Council on Population, Health and Welfare. Call Paolo at 852-1989 or 833-4067, or NVC at 896-5497.

New albums from Paolo Nutini and Girl Valencia

Scottish singer-songwriter Paolo Nutini shows off his various musical influences—from rock and folk-pop to blues and jazz—in his 10-song recording debut, "These Streets," which features the hit song, "Last Request," and its follow-up, "Jenny Don't be Hasty."

For her part, talented Filipina recording artist Girl Valencia has also released her latest album, "Driftwood Traveling." The sultry singer's beautifully conceived pop-jazz collection features 12 sassy tracks like "For Better or Worse," "Underground River," "My Open Sea and Sky," "Wherever" and "Driftwood." Her album's use of poetry, music and romance sets it apart from the vacuous but hook-driven ballads of contemporary pop and jazz. A must-have.

TIMBERLAKE. Hosts 20th Annual Kids' Choice Awards.

Must-see cartoons

On Cartoon Network, must-see cartoons for March include the premiere of "Johnny Test" today, and all-new episodes of "Peep and the Big, Wide World" starting on March 5, weekdays at 8:30 a.m. More cartoon favorites can be found in "Chunky Weekend Toons," weekends from 4 to 6 p.m.,

On "Cartoon Network Theater," weekends at 8 a.m., viewing treats include: today, "Justice League: Starcrossed." Tomorrow, "Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends." March 10, "Batman: Mark of the Phantom." March 11, "AcceleRacers: Ignition."

'Ang Perlas ng Karagatan'

The Child Study Center of Miriam College presents the original children's musical, "Ang Perlas ng Silangan," about how Queen Marina and her underwater subjects deal with conflict and overcome obstacles to find the magical Pearl of the Sea, which has the power to bring everlasting peace to a world in chaos. The play goes onstage from Mar. 6 to 9 at the campus' Marian Auditorium. Call 435-9235.

Ladine wins Mariah's nod

Grab a copy of Ladine Roxas' latest album, "Here to

MR./G3

AMADOR, MARAMARA AND ALAJAR. Revisit Eve Ensler's controversial play at the PhilTrade Center on March 6.

20 years ago in the movies

From page G4

Torre, "Mga Agila ng Arkong Bato" with Rey Malonzo, "Anak ni Zuma" with Max Laurel,

"Vigilante" with Rudy Fernandez, "Barbaro Santo" with Augusto Buenaventura, "Hitmen" with Ramon Revilla and Vic Vargas, "Boy Tornado" with Ramon Revilla Jr., "Kapag Puno na Ang Salop" with Fernando Poe Jr., "Boy de Sabog" with Mark Joseph, "Agila at Falcon" with Fernando Poe Jr. and Tony Ferrer, and "Anak Badjao" with Anthony Alonzo.

Categories

Together, sex and action dramas comprised the majority of the local movies shown in 1987, with the remaining 39 mainly falling in the drama and comedy categories. The dramas (14) included "Tagos ng Dugo" with Vilma Santos, "Ayokong Tumuntong sa Lupa" with Christopher de Leon,

"Kung Aagawin Mo ang Lahat sa Akin," with Sharon Cuneta and Jackielou Blanco, "Ibigay Mo sa Akin ang Bukas" with Vilma Santos, "Bakit Iisa ang Pag-ibig?" with Snooky, "Bunsong Kerubin" with Susan Roces, "Maging Akin Ka Lamang" with Christopher de Leon and Lorna Tolentino, "Remember Me, Mama" with Pilar Pilapil,

"Saan Nagtatago and Pag-ibig?" with Vilma Santos, "Paano Kung Wala Ka Na?" with Susan Roces, "Pinulot Ka Lang sa Lupa" with Lorna Tolentino, "Walang Karugtong ang Nakaraan" with Christopher de Leon and Sharon Cuneta, "The Untold Story of Melanie Marquez," and "Olongapo" with Jaclyn Jose.

Comedies

And comedies totaled 24 productions: "Forward March" with Tito, Vic and Joey, "Prinsesang Gusgusin" with Lotlot de Leon, "Bata-Batuta" with Dolphy, "Jack & Poy" with Maricel Soriano and William Martinez, "Kalabaw Lang ang Tumatanda" with Cachupoy, "Ang Busog at Ang Tatlong Ilog" with Rolly Quizon, "Mr. Bugoy Goes to Congress" with Dolphy and Nora Aunor, "Mga Lahing Pikutin" with Eddie Gutierrez, "Jack & Jill" with Sharon Cuneta and Herbert Bautista, "Shoot That Ball" with Tito, Vic and Joey, "Rangers in the Wrong War" with Cachupoy, "Di Bale na Lang" with Gary Valenciano, "Working Girls 2" with Edu Manzano, "Mga Anak ni Facifica Falayfay" with Dolphy, "Pulis Iskwad" with Redford White, "Ako si Kikoy, Ako si Kikay" with Roderick Paulate,

"Ready, Aim, Fire" with Tito, Vic and Joey, "Takbo, Bilis, Takbo" with Herbert Bautista, "The Rookies and the Mighty Kids" with Ramon Zamora, "Puto" with Herbert Bautista, "Takot Ako, Eh" with Matet, "Black Magic" with Dolphy, "Kumander Gringga" with Roderick Paulate, and "Action is Not Missing" with Dolphy.

Instructively, sex and action drams are no longer in vogue, but dramas and comedies continue to be hitmakers—20 long years after 1987.

The more things change, the more some of them remain the same!

SANTOS. Challenging role in "Tagos ng Dugo."

CUNETA AND DE LEON. Teamed up in "Walang Karugtong ang Nakaraan."

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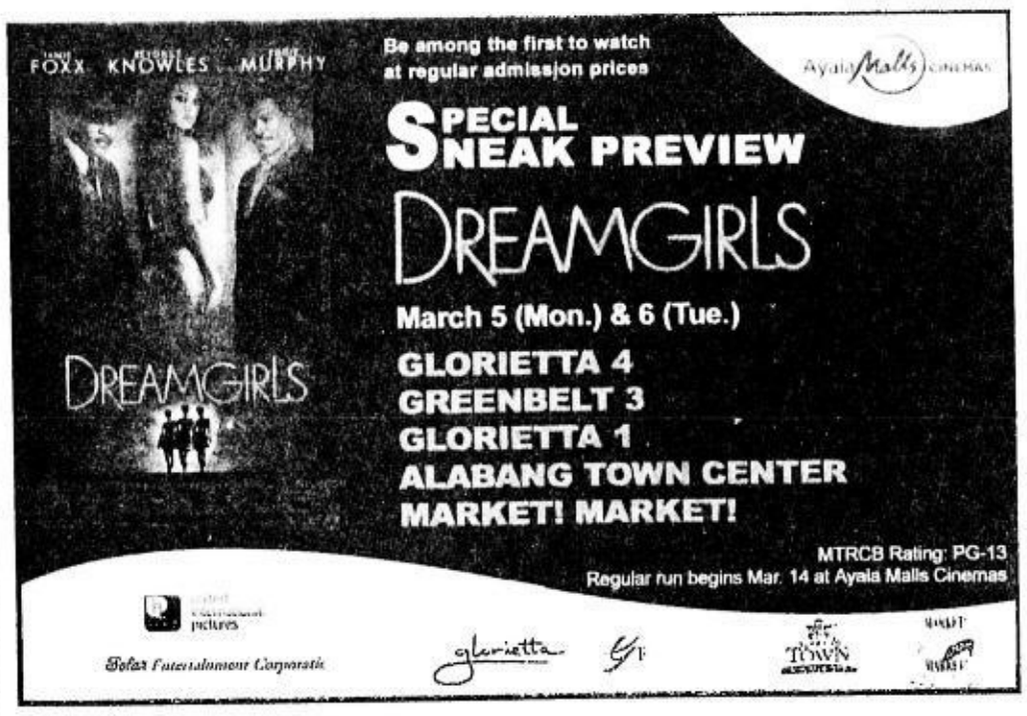

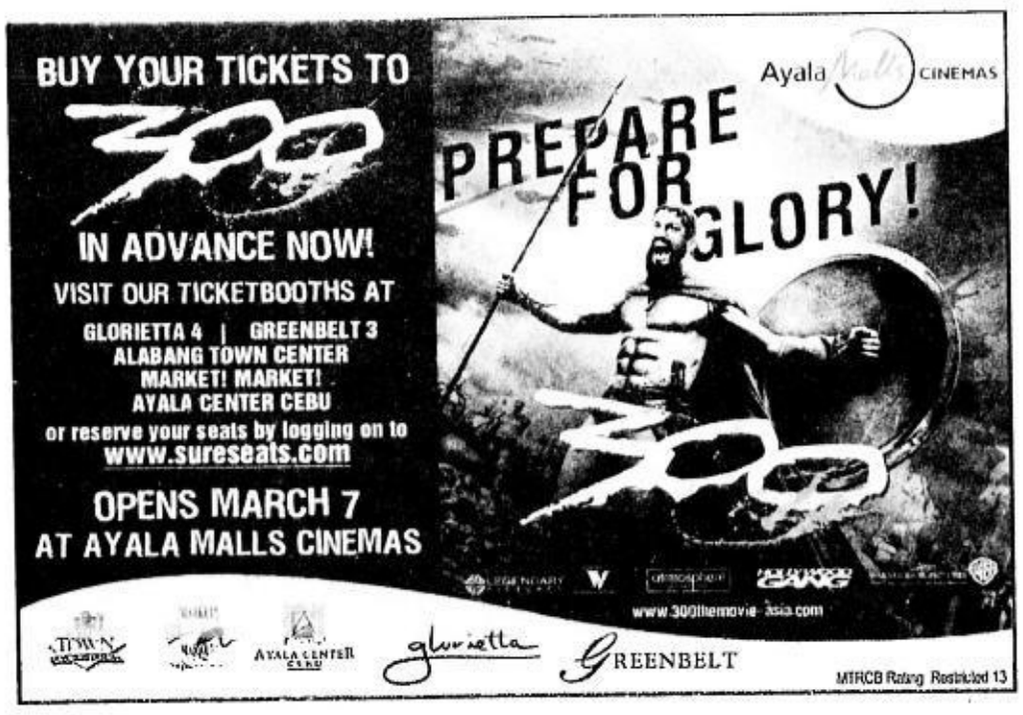

Mr...

From page G2

Stay...Ladine," and listen to "Lahat Para sa 'Yo," the Voice of Asia winner's Filipino adaptation of Mariah Carey's hit ballad, "My All." Record executives at MCA and Sony BMG Music weren't optimistic when Ladine broached the idea of seeking the singer's blessing to wax a Tagalog cover of Mariah's chart-topping tune.

One month later, however, they got the surprise of their lives when the pop diva gave Ladine the go-signal to record the local version!

ROXAS. Records Mariah's hit—in Tagalog.

20 years ago in the movies

By Nestor U. Torre

TWENTY FILM SEASONS AGO, how was the Filipino movie industry doing? How many full-length features did it produce in 1987? How did it fare compared to its situation today? Our visit to the past could prove to be instructive:

Meager output

In 1987, four main types of movies were made—sex drama, action, comedy and drama. Some 95 films were produced—less than the industry's record of 200 some years back, but definitely more than the mainstream industry's meager output last year.

The sexy flicks shown in 1987 included "Tag-init . . . Nagpuputik ang Langit" with George Estregan and Amanda Amores, "Alabok sa Lupa" with Dina Bonnevie and Dindo Fernando, "Ginto sa Putikan" with Stella Strada II, "Ulan, Init at Hamog" with Amanda Amores, Didith Romero and Lala Montelibano, "The Sisters" with Stella Suarez and Rita Avila,

"Stolen Moments" with Alma Moreno, Miguel Rodriguez and Rio Locsin, "Hubad na Pangarap" with Anna Marie Guetierrez and Julio Diaz, "Paano Maibabalik ang Nakaraan?" with Cristina Crisol, "Lala" with Lala Montelibano, "Diwata" with Olga Miranda and Lala, "Gawin sa Dilim" with Lampel Cojuangco, "Mga Lihim ng Kalapati" with Isadora, "Selos" with Amanda Amores, Bobby Benitez, Cherrie Madrigal and Ronald Nepomuceno,

"Killer AIDS" with Emily Loren, Maureen Mauricio and Liza Elizalde, "GI Baby" with Cherrie Madrigal, "Ibigin Mo Ako nang Higit sa Lahat" with Cherrie Madrigal and Carla Caballero, "Pakwela" with Anna Marie Gutierrez, "Laruang Putik" with Sarsi Emmanuel, "Anak ng Asawa Ko" with Vida Verde and Emily Loren,

"When Good Girls Go Wrong" with Ma. Isabel Lopez, Myrna Castillo and Isadora, "Akin Ka Ngayong Gabi" with Lampel Cojuangco and Farrah Floro, "Sa Araw at Gabi, Saan Ka Pupunta?" with Tanya Gomez and Brandy Ayala, and "Apoy" with Amanda Amores.

That's 23 out of 95 films, clearly making up a substantial percentage of the industry's 1987 output.

Actioners

For their part, actioners also totaled 23: "Get Victor Corpuz" with Rudy Fernandez, "Kapag Lumaban ang Api" with Fernando Poe Jr., "Kamagong" with Lito Lapid, "Kapitan Pablo" with Ramon Revilla, "Anak ng Lupa" with Julio Diaz, "Simaron ng Isabela" with Garry Gallardo, "Maruso" with Lito Lapid,

"Ultimatum Ceasefire" with Ramon Revilla, "Cabarlo" with Lito Lapid, "Alsa Masa" with Mohammad Faysal, "Batas sa Aking Kamay" with FPJ, "Balweg" with Phillip Salvador, "Target Sparrow Unit" with Ramon Revilla Jr., "Susuko Ba Ako, Inay?" with Joel

20 YEARS/ G3

POE in " Kapag Lumaban ang Api."

BONNEVIE. Topbilled the sexy drama, "Alabok sa Lupa."

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